

Letters of a volunteer in the Spanish-American war [by] George G. King.

LETTERS OF A VOLUNTEER *in the* SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

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FOREWORD

This book is merely a collection of my letters (with interpolations) written home during the Spanish War,—casually and hastily written, but now appearing—after more than thirty years—to constitute a faithful chronicle of the precarious experience of a volunteer soldier in that forgotten episode.

I have deleted many names and personal references; one of the prerogatives of every old soldier is to tell his own story.

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G. G. K.

ITINERARY

Concord, Massachusetts

Framingham, Massachusetts

Falls Church, Virginia

Charleston, South Carolina

Siboney, Cuba

Guantanamo, Cuba

Guanica, Porto Rico

Ponce, Porto Rico

Adjuntas, Porto Rico

Utuado, Porto Rico

Arecibo, Porto Rico

San Juan, Porto Rico

LETTERS OF A VOLUNTEER IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The Spanish-American War was declared by Congress on April 25, 1898.

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My home was in Concord, Massachusetts. It immediately became known that the Sixth Regiment, an infantry regiment which included the Concord Company, was to be called. There were a few vacancies in the Company, and I volunteered for one of them.

The week between enrollment and departure was lively with excitement, discussion, and enthusiasm. Then came the actual falling into ranks for entrainment to State camp. The company formed in line near the Wright Tavern, facing the Monument. We were surrounded by a throng of relatives, neighbors, and friends. These were speeches by the distinguished sons of the two great men—Ralph Waldo Emerson and Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar—who had rendered similar service upon the departure of the Concord Company in 1861.

Three times in the month of April, and by a curious coincidence at intervals of exactly eighty-six years 6 to a day, the Concord Company had departed from the Common for military service,—in 1689 to expel Governor Andros, in 1775 to take part in the first battle of the Revolution, and in 1861 for the defense of the Union.

We joined the rest of the regiment at Framingham.

Framingham was a familiar place for many of us. It was the site of the annual “muster” and we had spent many June weeks there. We found all of the accustomed conditions. The common wall tents with board floors large enough to accommodate seven men were already in place, the cook houses in operation. We resumed the usual routine.

However, there was a new atmosphere of expectancy. Other units were in camp, and in process of preparation for actual service. We had not yet been mustered into the National army. Our purpose at Framingham was in part to undergo the physical examinations and in part to receive additional equipment. The physical examinations, which we anticipated with a considerable amount of apprehension, were of two kinds. We became familiar with the process through the experiences of other companies in camp. The first test was an

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eye test. The general physical examination followed; it was hasty and superficial, but a certain amount of stress was laid on the matter of weight. This was in accordance with the stereotyped regulations of the regular army.

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We were examined in squads of eight and were required to strip for examination. Being among the taller men, I was in the first squad; the average height was nearly six feet and our individual weight according to army standards should have been at least 168. We stripped and presented ourselves before the surgeon. We averaged not over 150. He looked at us comprehensively, shook his head, and laughed. We were an emaciated lot.

A general discussion followed—it usually did in the old militia days,—and all but two of us talked our way into the service although we were all distinctly under army requirements. I thought that the requirements were extreme, particularly for service in the tropics; two of the men most obviously under weight were the only two men in the company whose names never appeared on the sick book.

We had already begun to write letters, and always continued to write them. Letters were our only contacts with home. We wrote in all varieties of circumstances, and on any kind of paper we could get.

Camp Dewey, Framingham, Mass. May 11, 1898.

No doubt before you get this you will have heard that we were all accepted, barring —, —, possibly —, and one or two others.

Tomorrow I go down on my knees, not in thankfulness but in the more practical occupation of washing my shirt. The handkerchiefs are very acceptable, and will relieve me of some bother, though it is likely that I may send them back when I come finally to pack up for the South.

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We are certain to go somewhere soon. Before we go we expect to have thirty hours' furlough (and \$5 advance pay). If we don't, I shall come home on a pass, over night or Sunday. But I want my red sweater, and rather not wait till I can get out. So please send by mail or express, or by somebody coming over. It's pretty cold for May.

Visitors are plenty, too plenty for a military camp. It's a poor place for ladies,—must be, from the nature of things.

On May 12, 1898, we were mustered into the United States Army. There was some grim joking to the effect that we “were in for it now”; but no change in our routine.

Camp Dewey, Framingham, Mass. May 15, 1898.

The boots came today,—through Mr. Emmott,—and are just the thing. In spite of the rain there has been a big crowd of Concord people over today,—Charlie Prescott and his wife, Mrs. Cook, the Emmotts, and a good many of the relatives of the Irish boys. I wish they would stay away. This prolonged good-by is getting painful.

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We feel though that it won't last much longer. We are being issued our remaining equipment today, in a hurry, and it seems to be the general impression that we shall go in a very few days.

We went on our army rations last evening. They are wholesome but not over-abundant. We have two cooks in the company, and each man receives 4 hardtack, a piece of meat, a potato and a little coffee. Each man has his own tin dishes and has to wash them himself,—which detracts from one's appetite somewhat. That reminds me that I want you to mail me a small dish towel.

The change of food affects most of us a little, as it naturally would. I don't expect to be quite so vivacious for two or three days, until I can become accustomed to the diet.

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Concord was only fourteen miles away. Fortunately this was before the day of automobiles. Of course we were delighted by the visits, but we thought that we were being taken too seriously. We were still a very long way from the enemy.

Our new equipment was an individual cooking outfit to be carried in the haversacks,—a tin cup, two tin plates, one convertible into a frying pan by virtue of a folding handle, a knife, a fork, and a spoon.

Camp Dewey, Framingham, Mass. May 19, 1898.

I supposed that by this time we would be well on our way to Virginia, but after a day of 10 entire uncertainty, we are still here. The order to report at Washington came a day or two ago, and it was supposed that detailed orders in regard to transportation would come in time to enable us to get away today. We packed up everything in our knapsacks and got ready to the last particular. This afternoon we drilled with packed knapsacks, canteens, and haversacks, and expected every moment to be headed for the gate. But we are still here and no nearer a definite idea of what is to happen.

Mrs. Wheeler's tooth-brush cases and brushes were distributed this morning. I have been very busy looking after the company property. (The quartermaster went home to get married.) Altogether I have looked after 1480 pieces of property in the last three days. It has kept me busy, but that is better than lying in the shade of a tent, waiting for orders that don't come.

Everything goes well. Camp habits grow; there are fewer clean shaves and more dirty faces. We have long been reconciled to army rations.

Yesterday we had a surprise in the shape of a freezer of excellent strawberry ice cream. Ford was away. A friend of his brought in the freezer, and not finding Ford, gave it to a few of the select. Ice cream is always good, but here it tasted like something ambrosial.

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Everybody is well. X was laid up for a day from over-work, but he is alright now. Everybody 11 is getting used to the life, and there are fewer stomach aches.

Write as soon as we move, to I Company, 6th Mass. Infantry, Falls Church, Virginia.

Thenceforth I used "stomach ache" generically—and sometimes euphemistically—for any ailment below the belt.

A "knapsack" was an obsolete contrivance dating from the Civil War, but ultimately replaced by the familiar "collar roll."

Mrs. William Wheeler gave each man a tooth brush in a compact celluloid case. It was an exceptionally useful and sensible present.

For the time being, I was assigned to do the work of the company quartermaster sergeant. This and various other tasks were probably assigned to me because I had had wide experience in the militia. When the war began I was a member of the Cadets, a Boston battalion which was not called for service; I obtained a furlough from the Cadets in order to go into the National service with the company from my native town.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. May 23, 1898.

This is my first chance to write from our new and elegant residence on the soil of Virginia. I shall have a chance later on to write a longer letter describing our trip; it is certain that I 12 sha'n't forget it, even if I wait a long while before writing. It was such a trip as I never expect to see again,—one long ovation from South Framingham to Washington. All through western Massachusetts, at Springfield, and Pittsfield, crowds met us and piled in souvenirs, food, and cigars. In return they grabbed all our buttons, and gave us an occasion to try sewing.

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At Baltimore we marched in review, and got more cheers and grub. I never saw a prettier city or brighter, better looking people.

The trip was a hard pull on some of the boys. The Pittsfield celebration was an hour after midnight. Albany was reached at four, and with these and the smaller stations there was no chance to sleep that night. The next night we slept in the Southern R. R. cars after crossing Washington at eleven o'clock. I,—because I was wideawake,—fed out our supper to the other fellows,—carefully picking my way up the aisle to avoid stepping on those who were sleeping on the floor for want of seats. Yesterday morning,—after a three mile march through Virginia mud,—we went into camp in more Virginia mud, pitched tents, dug ditches, and spread our straw beds. The camp seems to be a good one, as ground generally goes, well drained, high enough, and fairly watered. We drink nothing but distilled water.

Last evening rumors got around of trouble to be made us during the night by a Pennsylvania regiment camped here,—a regiment of coal-miners, that has a pretty hard reputation. 13 They are jealous of us here because we are better drilled and better equipped. In the evening the rumors got more prevalent, and at eleven special guards were asked to volunteer. They gave our tent a first chance. We all wanted to go, but finally Johnny Anderson and Phil Davis, who had been transferred to us, were picked out. (So was I.) No scrapping resulted after all, but we had the fun of waiting for it. This morning — who was out last night, and was due today for guard duty, overslept mount, and I went out in his place. I am just off now, and going downtown with Roy Whitcomb. Don't believe any stories of discomfort. Some of the boys are homesick and see the blue side of things, but they'll get over it. Everybody is well, and will be cheerful as soon as they get their sleep again. More in a day or two.

I omitted to mention that we were also given little bottles of liquor. No one got enough to do any harm, and it undoubtedly improved our rear platform speeches.

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At Baltimore, notwithstanding the cordiality, we first encountered a hint of the Southern attitude. The regiment had a negro company officered by negroes.

At the train we were given fruit and pastry in individual boxes prepared by the Baltimore girls, who had written their names and addresses on the enclosed paper napkins. This circumstance laid the foundation for a flood of correspondence, with tragic results as you shall see.

I never saw a more desolate place than Dunn Loring, where we detrained. A drizzly rain was falling. We could see nothing but two or three dilapidated buildings huddled against a forest of scrub pine, into which disappeared a winding, rutty road,—all as grey and cheerless as the sky. Two lanky, bewiskered natives, with their lanky dogs at their knees, sat on a log and watched us indifferently. For hours and indeed for days we had been feted and applauded and admired; this was a dismal contrast.

It seems foolish that a fight between two regiments in camp was really apprehended, but there were no military police, and no general guard; each unit shifted for itself.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. May 26, 1898.

Letters came this morning. I want to answer your questions in regard to the camp,—particularly in regard to its sanitary conditions.

When we got here, Sunday morning, it was raining, and the ground that had been allotted to us was very muddy. All the soil down here is full of red clay, and in a rain it becomes very sticky on top, but drying up and hardening very fast when the sun comes out. The camp ground was in the muddiest condition when we got here,—luckily perhaps for us, because when it is dry and hard it is almost impossible to drive tent pegs or dig draining trenches. But the boys were all tired from their long car ride and walk, and in their disconsolate frame of mind the red mud on the slope where our tents were to be pitched was anything but inviting. Besides that, the water available for drinking purposes has to be

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brought more than a mile; for a day or two it was brought by hand, but now a wagon goes for it, and we have all we want. So now that the sun is out and the camp dry, and water is plenty and good, no one who is not homesick criticizes the selection of the camp ground. I think myself that it was particularly well chosen; tracts of land equal to the accommodating of 12,000 men are not plenty.

There has been very little sickness in camp, considering the acclimating and the change from civil to army routine. One man in one of the Ohio regiments died of a fever supposed to be diptheria, which he brought from home. It has not gone any further. The 7th Ohio was exposed to measles in Columbus, and there are a few mild cases in the regiment, over a mile from us and about as likely to infect us as Sudbury is to infect Concord. In our regiment there have naturally been some colds, some indigestion, and a boil or two, but not a thing serious. My only complaint is that it makes me sleepy to an extent that sleeping from 9 till 5:30 don't seem to satisfy. Luckily our beds are made all the time.

This is the truth; you can give any anxious mother the benefit of it.

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Evidently stories had reached home that we were badly off. Well: it was not exactly like the Copley-Plaza, and complaints if made were not without reason. Rather suddenly, we were getting our first taste of hard living.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 1, 1898.

I haven't much news to write,—because there isn't any,—but I don't suppose you can hear any too often that I am still getting fat and robust. I haven't had my turn of sickness yet, and sha'n't mind passing it; everybody seems fated to about a day of the dumps, part homesickness and part getting used to the change. We manage to tide each individual over his blues, and so far there haven't been any hard cases.

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Today — is up with indigestion. Don't tell anybody; he may not write home, and I shouldn't want it to get there through me. He isn't sick, and it would start an uneasiness out of all proportion. We took him up to the Hospital because it is a cool place to lie down,—better than our tent, which is a little muggy to lie down in a day like today. Outdoors there is always a cool breeze, but inside one feels the heat. The Hospital is on a hill, and always comfortable.

X doesn't stand it very well. He has a headache every little while, and I guess he is pretty homesick. The Memorial Day telegram that the roll was being called was a touch of realism that was a little too much.

I am still busy. Within the last three days I have made out three payrolls and two muster-rolls, beside some odd orders and accounts.

Harvey Wheeler was here last night, and William Wheeler and his wife are coming in a day or two. That reminds me that Mrs. Wheeler's purchases have turned out eminently useful.

The boys are getting boxes of grub from home. Don't try to send me anything. I have a well trained army stomach now, and I don't want to revive its recollections of more effiiminate diet. But you might send me a new tooth brush.

These bookkeeping activities were a part of my new job as company clerk. The other part of the work was reading the Army Regulations. Orders had been issued for instructions one hour daily. The company adjourned to some shady spot in the nearby woods, where it was my painful duty to read and expound the regulations. Of course nobody listened, but as a rebuke to tiresome talkers Dennis Sheehan later coined the phrase: "Oh, go up in the woods!"

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 7, 1898.

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We are all beginning to feel pretty certain that our regiment at least is to move somewhere—probably South—as soon as recruited. Yesterday 18 day I was told by a friend of mine who had been over at the telegraph office that while he was waiting there he had got a glimpse of a telegram to a major in the 8th Ohio, which read to the effect that this Army Corps was to be moved to Porto Rico as soon as possible, and that Mark Hanna was authority for the statement. I have no doubt but that this telegram was seen by him there. Then a man in Co. A who is in some way related to Adj. Gen. Corbin claims to have had the same information from the War Department. And this morning Butler Ames, our adjutant, told the first sergeants that within ten days probably we would go to a new camp at Fernandina, Fla., to be moved eventually to Porto Rico. He said that if we didn't go there it would be because we were going to the Philippines, which was a very remote possibility, but that in any event we would move as soon as possible after being recruited. So putting it all together, I begin to feel that our days here are numbered.

We sha'n't be much grieved. This is a stupid place, and is getting too crowded to be pleasant. Besides every time we move breaks the monotony of drilling. Then above all most of us want to go as far as anybody does.

Captain Cook starts home today to get the 128 men that our batallion must have. He will be gone a week. We are pretty curious to see who comes. They'll all be pretty sick, with homesickness and stomach ache. We had ten days' training at Framingham, and most of us 19 have had our hours of discomfort. They will come fresh from the comforts of home, and have it all to stand at once.

I realize when I think it over how we have gradually hardened. Today we had canned salt beef for breakfast, as a luxury to take the place of the beans, which had been burnt and didn't seem to suit some of the fellows. But a little over two weeks ago we had a traveling ration of the same kind of beef, and many of the fellows turned up their noses at it in disgust. When we left Framingham there was a good deal of complaining because of the

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want of mattresses; the night before last we all slept on the hard ground or an equally hard board floor, and nobody seemed to have insomnia.

Sunday night and Monday brought down a good many victims. Saturday night I had a box sent me by the girls of Lexington, with a note saying that as they had no company themselves they wanted to turn to and help the Concord boys. Their box was a dandy, home-made candy, cake, bread, meat, sardines, cheese, about everything you can think of, but everything well chosen and wholesome. So the orgie began Saturday night. Sunday morning we squared away to eat up the barrels from Concord. Right in the middle of it we were told that the third battalion of the Sixth was detailed for exterior guard for twenty-four hours beginning at 4:30 P.M. Sunday. This meant a broken night and what little sleep we could get on the ground. The result was that by Monday noon there were 20 about twenty stomach aches. None of them were alarming except — who seems very likely to give out. I shouldn't want this repeated, but I can't see how he is going to stand it. He has had several attacks of indigestion, all severe, and knew before he came that he had a valvular heart trouble. For the robust, the life is invigorating, but for the frail it is something of a trial. I seem to be one of the robust. I was sleepy for a day or two, getting used to the hours, but now even getting up at 5:30 doesn't worry me.

The information available to the man in the ranks was very meagre, and we grasped at straws, but on this occasion I was substantially correct.

Each Company was short thirty-two men of its full war strength. When war was declared, there were some professions of regret that the Company wasn't larger, and of ardent hope that there might be another chance later. Now the chance had come, and we were waiting with considerable curiosity to see if our various neighbors would redeem their declarations of eagerness to go. Some did; some did not.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 9, 1898.

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I wish that if I have any money that has come in over what has to be paid out, you would send it. It isn't imperative, but there is lots of chance to buy strawberries and milk; I am not much on sutler's pie. I should like some postage 21 age stamps too; they are very useful. It's late tonight, late for us who go to bed at nine. A heavy storm has just passed over, and we have spent most of the evening watching our ditches. They were all right,—luckily. Nothing has happened but the review,—watch the Herald for a cut of the colors and guard.

More in a day or two.

I was especially interested in the pictures of the colors and guard because I was on the regimental color guard. Apart from any distinction attaching to the detail, it was of practical value because it relieved me from ordinary guard duty.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 11, 1898.

Your letter has just this minute come. It is very gratifying to me to find that in the general decrease in the amount of mail that we receive here, I suffer no more than the others. You know I help handle all the regimental mail now,—or perhaps you don't know. The Chaplain runs our post office department here, and has a man named Moore, a corporal in the Fitchburg Company who is a postal clerk, to do the real work. About a week ago I went over to help, and since then Moore and I have had a tent all to ourselves for an office. We distribute two regimental mails a day, sell stamps and frank soldier's letters. A week ago the average mail was perhaps 350 letters and parcels; now it has decreased fully one-half.

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Thursday we received \$16 state pay, and to meet the demand for means of sending money home, I suggested arranging to take the boy's money to Washington and get orders. The Chaplain told me to go ahead as I thought best. I went up yesterday with three hundred dollars, and brought back the orders in the evening. I had time to go to the Capitol and spend an hour or two with Billy Garland. He took me around the inside, and showed

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me Mark Hanna, Ben Tillman, and all the other big guns. Today we are collecting money again, but I don't expect to go up. I took the chance to eat a big dinner, and to buy a cheap set of light gauze underclothing at a closing out sale. Two shirts and two pairs of drawers cost me 96 cents; this is so cheap that I can afford to renew often if I want to.

I haven't started any money home yet. I am going to send twenty to twenty-five dollars when the U. S. pay comes, Monday or Tuesday. I don't need it all at once, and I do not feel safe with so much in my somewhat worn pockets. I am going to send another package of souvenirs and such things in a day or two; they seem to be valued in Concord.

In spite of our somewhat peremptory demand for candy, I don't want you to send me anything to eat. I don't know whether I've told you about our boxes Saturday,—I think I have, but it is a hard place to write letters with any system.* * *

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But although I have access to all the civilized grub that I want, I should very much like to have you send me down about four handkerchiefs and some more of those cheap socks. Then I should like about half a dozen hooks and eyes, medium size, black, and my brown cadet trousers, if they can be mailed.

Tell papa not to consider any trip down here. It is far from being an easy place to travel to, and when he got here his chance to see me would be very limited. Then he might not be able to look at camp methods of living with the soldier's eye of faith. You see we have gotten used to it gradually, but to have it sprung on you all of a sudden might be a little jarring. Then above all there is nothing so hard as to see people only to have it emphasized that it is to be only for a moment. I think every visit from a Concord person has induced half a dozen attacks of homesickness.

Most of the boys are in good spirits,—all over their homesickness and stomach ache. I am still feeling very well indeed,—I tried to find a set of scales yesterday, but couldn't. But I

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know from my clothes that I am getting bigger. I had a shave yesterday,—the first in three weeks. I lost my goatee, but I couldn't part with my moustache.

We can't spend any more money for pies or lemonade. The authorities have ordered them all off the grounds.

I saw an interesting letter yesterday. It was written by a Union soldier in 1861, on these very 24 grounds, when he was in camp here. The description of his situation didn't vary much from one I might give.

It looks as if Porto Rico is to be our eventual destination, with a stop at Fernandina, Fla., on the way. We may go in two or three weeks—I rather incline to think that we will, if equipped in that time. We have about exhausted this camp as a drill ground. I don't think any further change of climate will affect us.

I omitted one incident of my Washington trip. There was a sergeant—not Moore—who wanted to go to Washington to see his girl and urged me to take him as guard. So we went together and together bought the money orders. Thereupon he announced himself,—to the effect that he as a sergeant outranked me as a private, and that he would not go back with me. He appeared in camp the next day, passing the sentries on a pass he had borrowed from a quartermaster sergeant, and was ordered to his tent under arrest. Then came the trial,—charge A. W. O. L.; plea illness. The defendant took time to bring in witnesses and produced a whole bevy of Washington girls, all of whom affirmed that he had been the sickest man they ever saw. Of course there was an acquittal.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 15, 1898.

There still seems to be no news from the second call men. Like everything else in the army, 25 their appearance seems to be delayed way beyond the schedule time. The extra men for the other regiments have been going by in disconsolate-looking groups for a day or two. We all go down to look at them,—hardly to welcome them. “Doc Turpin,” who is the

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funny man of Company L, yelled at one group yesterday, "You better go back now; they haven't seen you." This is about the gist of the greetings they get.

We don't get any news about going South, either. Col. Woodward told one of the boys that we were going to move our camp to the battlefield of Bull Run, thirty miles from here. I don't believe it. I think our next move will be to some point in the extreme south, and I don't think that will happen for several weeks. It is going to be a long pull.

I hope my check got through all right. I am not going to send any more, because I am going to buy a \$10 folding Kodak. I have already ordered it, and expect it today or tomorrow. Lots of pictures will be a good thing to have. The camera is about ten inches long, four inches wide, and an inch and a half thick,—when folded up. It carries twelve plates and takes a picture $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$. I shall send the rolls of film home by mail,—undeveloped,—for Louise or somebody to look after.

The officers have let up on the drilling a good deal lately; I guess they are a little tired themselves. We have a new excitement in the competition between the companies to secure the 26 colonel's orderly. Each day at guard-mounting the adjutant picks out the best dressed, most soldierly-looking private to be orderly at headquarters for a day. He has the whole guard to choose from, of course. Company F had it five days in succession, but yesterday we got it. It was the first time we had gone to the trouble of picking out a special suit and new leggings. Phil Davis was the man. Today we lost it again.

The mail is decreasing fast, but mine seems to hold its own. We are getting more used to this kind of life, and many of us have stopped the indiscriminate letter-writing that used to occupy our spare time with. X used to write and receive six or seven letters a day. I can't imagine what he found to say; every day is exactly like every other down here, weather, events, everything. I am at last entirely accustomed to getting only seven hours sleep, and feel wide awake all day. There is still an occasional stomach ache, but most of

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the acclimating is over with. There are a few sore arms resulting from vaccination. They examined us all and vaccinated those who needed it. I was glad I didn't seem to need it.

Company L was the colored Company. The colored boys had—and made—a lot of fun.

On the whole the camera was a success. I still have it, but I didn't carry it all the way. At Arecibo I was loading a train and had laid my haversack aside. When I slung it on again, the camera—containing a 27 roll of exposed film—was gone. Three months later, when I was back at work in Boston, one of the line officers, dropping in for a social call, showed me some photographs of the regiment in Porto Rico. One, in particular, was a beauty. It was of the regiment in line before the cathedral in the plaza at Utuado, and was taken from the top of a nearby pillar. The regiment was in line before the cathedral only once; there was only one available pillar; and I had been the only person on the pillar. So I inquired if I could by any chance obtain a duplicate set of the pictures. I was told where they came from, called on the man, and got my camera back.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 17, 1898.

The evidences multiply that we are going in a few days, probably by Tuesday or Wednesday, to Fernandina. I get this from the quartermaster. I have a new job, in the Q. M. department, that will probably mean a steady detail. I shall give up my mail job for the better one.

Your mail scheme is a good one, but perhaps couldn't be carried out if we move. Then I doubt if there is anyone you could reach. Everybody from Concord is well looked after by his friends. If we don't move I will figure up who has been neglected, but as we probably will, I don't think it's worth while to bother.

We are having a holiday today, the seventeenth of June, and there are ball games and 28 sports going on. We expect recruits hourly, but as yet none for this regiment have shown

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up. They come in all the time for the other regiments,—a hard looking lot. We are satisfied that a good many of the “second call” men are not coming.

We had our own ways of stimulating the mail. For instance, I struck up a very lively correspondence with the girl whose name and address were in my luncheon box at Baltimore,—we will call her Florence Pauley. According to the photograph she sent me,—presumably her likeness,—she was personally charming; but she was grieving her life away for pity of soldiers in general and (as she said) for me in particular.

One hot Sunday afternoon at Alger, Jimmy Hagerty asked me how I was going to kill the time. “Writing my Florence, I guess,” I said languidly.

“Whose your Florence? I got a Florence, too,” replied Jimmy.

“Where does yours live?”

“Baltimore.”

“Where does yours live?”

“Baltimore.”

“What's yours name?”

“Pauley.”

“What's yours name?”

“Pauley.”

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So, inasmuch as Florence was so sympathetic about our individual health and welfare, and evidently impartial in her solicitude, we severally wrote her in kind,—that it was true

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that we—Jimmy or I, as the case might be,—were in great anguish of mind, because—in his case Jimmy Hagerty's tent-mate George King,—and in my case my tent-mate Jimmy Hagerty—was very low with fever and entirely out of his head.

I never heard from Florence again.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 23, 1898.

I am going to take time enough to write you just a little, although time is awfully scarce article these days. I am very busy getting the quartermaster's accounts into business-like, compact shape in view of the possibility of moving. I have two clerks, working all day from about quarter past seven till supper. The system is wonderfully devised and very interesting. Incidentally there is a great deal of quasi-legal work in connection with interpreting the army regulations, and I have lots of fun this way.

I did manage to take a bath today,—the best I've had since I left home. We are waiting orders today; that is, we are to be in readiness to move, although we hardly expect to get started for a week. It cut us a good deal to see the Ninth go first, but we won't be far behind them. I guess it is to be Santiago sure enough, and then Porto Rico.

30

The Sheehans and the Collins came down today; all said “how very well you are looking.” Well, I am, and feeling well, too. I still weigh 154 and keep my record for health. X is in the hospital with mumps, and we have a few stomach aches, as usual, but the general health improves.

In a day or two we are going to send a box of unnecessaries home. Mine will be in the bottom, in my rubber blanket, or whatever else is marked for me. The other fellows' things will be called for. A few dirty clothes that I used to stand on when I got out of the brook,—and don't think my towels are all as dirty,—a few souvenirs, among them a flag that come on the Lexington box. I want to keep it.

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The Ninth was the Boston regiment. It had a terrible experience in the Santiago campaign and lost heavily from fever.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 26, 1898.

We are still waiting definite news of when we are to go. It looks now as if we were to have nearly another week here. Tomorrow the regiment goes on a two days' practice march to the Potomac, 12 miles. They carry their entire outfit,—blanket, shelter tent, change of underclothes, canteen, haversack, gun,—sixty or seventy pounds. I don't have to go,—too busy at the quartermaster's. There will be plenty of walking for me in more tropical countries.

31

Ralph has applied for a seven days' furlough to attend his brother's wedding, and may reach Concord ahead of this letter. He is going to ask you to get me some good light drawers, as good and as light as you can get. I want to leave here with as nearly a completely new outfit as I can. I have ordered a new suit, new hat, drawers, shirts, and blue shirt, all for \$7.50 which is deducted from my clothing allowance. I think that a good outfit now is of immensely more importance than the money when I get through. You can mail the drawers or send them by Ralph. I don't expect that the quartermaster will be able to get the drawers,—that is why I am sending home.

You have asked a good many times about my house-keeping arrangements. We wash our faces and hands in water that is drawn from one of the driven wells and kept in the company barrel. We take baths—two or three times a week,—in what the darkies call a branch, which is one size smaller than what they call a “crick,” which is several sizes smaller than a good respectable New England sink drain. This is a slight exaggeration. The brook is wide enough, and big enough, but in this drought it gets pretty low, and we have to walk a long way to find clean water. Still, with such good wells to help out, we manage to keep immaculate. I have just had a bath,—not ten minutes ago,—and am

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writing on the bank of the brook. It is as cool here as fall at home, although in the regiment the thermometer is at 102. That is the delightful 32 thing about this climate,—wherever it is shady there is breeze, and the air however hot it may be is always dry and fresh.

My clothes get a cold bath once in awhile, and a boiling once in a great while. But washing powder is very effective, and though I used to miss ironing, they are always clean. We have iron pails, and improvise scrubbing boards from planks by cutting parallel grooves like this-vvvvvv—. Our grub steadily improves. I stick absolutely to army rations now, although our canned goods aren't yet gone.

If you send a letter to me here,—or anywhere,—you better enclose some postage stamps. I should like enough money to buy a few more films. I want to carry five rolls when I go, and I have only three.

That practice march was the sum, substance and total of the regiment's service training. Otherwise it was “fours right” and “fours left” and once in a long while a deploying on the parade ground, but nothing more.

I think I exaggerated a little on the number of baths.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. June 30, 1898.

I've just a minute before the morning's mail goes. We are in a tearing hurry now, balancing books for our quarterly return July 1. There are tremendous discrepancies that resulted from 33 the confusion of the first few weeks, and my resources as a bookkeeper are pretty severely tested. On top of it all, Sweetser has been appointed acting Brigade Quartermaster, and has all the business of that office beside ours. He is arranging transportation for three regiments to Santiago, and carrying along supervision of supplies besides.

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Our new recruits are a good lot. X is among them,—a pretty frail looking boy, too. Y was in regimental hospital last night with indigestion—nothing serious. I didn't go on the march, but those who did came off well. It was a good deal of a strain. Poor—put in a night in the hospital with a touch of sun stroke. The heat was not so intense yesterday, but ran up to 114 a day or two ago.

The heat was terrific. One of our staff officers, who had a colored servant, used to lie on his cot, naked except for a sheet, and have the servant sprinkle the sheet with cold water; but down in the company streets we had no such expedients, and we were still wearing woolen clothing.

Camp Alger, Falls Church, Va. July 5, 1898.

You are probably in much the same doubt as we are in regard to our movements. Sunday night, after the news of Lawton's reverse reached Washington, we got oral orders from Brig. Gen. Garretson to move Monday to Newport News. 34 But with Monday came the news that the Americans had recovered all they had lost, and the order to move was never enforced. Today it is understood that the Eighth Ohio goes at once to New York to board the St. Paul, and that in a few days we are to go to Newport News and embark on the Duchess. This is a fair sample of the interminable rumors that are discussed here day in and day out. I have settled down into a position of calm resignation,—I am going to wait until I see the transport. I set my hopes on going yesterday,—which was very reasonable considering how very direct and unequivocal the orders were. Now that we didn't go then, I have begun to doubt our ever going.

Yesterday was a queer Fourth. We woke up with expectations of leaving, and were so occupied with that possibility that little was thought of celebrating. Then at noon the news of a victory at Santiago was officially confirmed, and the boys hunted up a few blank cartridges to celebrate. But the news of victory meant that the chances of our going away were a good deal decreased, and the celebration was far from whole hearted.

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Last night I slept on a bed and mattress for the first time in months. I live in a tent that is used entirely by the q. m. sergeant and myself, and yesterday Andrews, one of the color sergeants, offered me the use of his folding bed. I tell you it was a luxury. I turned in about eleven, after a little evening lunch of sardines, planning to have several hours of perfect comfort. 35 It didn't take me long to go to sleep. When I woke up again it was still dark, and raining hard. Hackett was snoring away in his camp hammock, which was slung between two short posts braced by guys hitched to pegs in the ground. Our tent has never been ditched, and whatever rain came down hill would run through and loosen up the ground. It rained harder and harder; then there was a slump over in the other side of the tent, and Hackett found himself lying in a puddle a couple of inches deep. The pegs pulled out when the ground got wet. He was more than half asleep, and in his bare feet, and soaking wet, and mad way through, and the whole situation nearly killed me. I haven't laughed so hard for some years. He had to stumble round in the dark and find a hammer and a hammock pin, and finally we got peaceably to sleep again. But I had another laugh this morning when I saw his fresh, clean, new hammock with a big mud spot right underneath him.

We have a band; they are very much in evidence just now. Their practice is done in a tent next mine, and I can hardly hear myself think. I don't know what will become of them when we get to the front, but as far as I can see ahead they will be one of the important parts of the regiment. Especial efforts were made to get musicians among the new men, and apparently a few were smoked out, although I am assured by the Chaplain that there is almost no real orchestration,—or something like that,—which 36 I interpret to mean that right between me and the Chaplain they are bum.

Capt. Cook reports everybody well and in good spirits, which is gratifying, I can tell you. He seems to have looked round a good deal and seen almost everybody.

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The band had a repertoire of three numbers,—“Banks of the Wabash,” “Coal Black Lady,” and “I’ll Make That Black Girl Mine,” in medley, three times or more a day.

It did valiant service, however, lifting us over the last hard miles into Ponce. Route marching looks easier, but there is no stimulant for weary legs like a military band.

En route to Charleston, S. C. July 5, 1898.

We have started South,—as no doubt you have learned long before this. I am writing this on the train, just over the No. Carolina line. I hope that the rickety road bed and still more rickety cars won’t make my writing absolutely illegible. Louise’s, Minnie’s, and papa’s letters reached me just in time,—when we were standing at Dunn Loring waiting for the train.

Yesterday was a busy day. We didn’t know,—for sure,—that we were going till about noon. Then we had to pick over our outfits, roll them up, pack our baggage and food, and march to the depot. Of course the Q. M. was the busiest man in the regiment. In spite of all he had to do he was about the most level-headed. His strength gave out in the middle of the afternoon, but he stuck to it until everything and everybody were aboard the trains, and the last I saw of him he was still running things manfully. As a rule, everybody was too rattled to pack a handbag,—to say nothing of packing three trains. I should say everybody in authority—the men were cool enough.

I did a hard afternoon’s work loading the headquarters car. Then I joined the company, and am with them now.

Our train is old but comfortable. The fact that it’s dirty doesn’t bother us much. The commissary has learned from past experience how to feed us, and that with our fast decreasing fastidiousness makes our meals entirely satisfactory. Canned food is a god-send.

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We didn't have a single sick man to leave behind. Everybody is in excellent health and spirits,—strong physically, well acclimated, and accustomed to army methods.

We shall be in Charleston two or three days probably. There we shall join troops from Chickamauga and be transported with them to Santiago. That seems to be the plan. We don't care much about the details. We aren't Readville soldiers any longer, and that's all we care.

If it is true,—as I hear,—that I am relied on to tell the truth about the boys, you can say that I never saw them better, nor ever saw a healthier, more robust company. Homesickness,—as a malady,—is a thing of the past. Personally I haven't a thing to apprehend. I have everything I need, and not a thing else. I am carrying a woolen blanket, a rubber blanket, a canvas shelter tent (or rather my half of one), a change of fine underclothing, three or four pairs of stockings, one towel, a comb, a tooth-brush, my dishes, a little paper and a pencil, my camera, 48 films, and my brown trousers. It may weigh, altogether, 45 pounds, not a bit heavy to carry, and not a bit lacking of what I want.

I shall write again at Charleston,—after that, whenever I can. I have no doubt that the government will be as efficient in providing mail facilities as it is in providing everything else.

We don't know what the news is from the front, but we don't expect to get to Cuba in time to help take Santiago. I rather think we will go to Porto Rico eventually. This is of course based on rumors, but on the kind of rumors that have been confirmed so far in substance every time. That would suit me first rate, but as I have said, I haven't any marked preference. The climatic dangers are all big bugaboos, and once on hostile soil we can feel that we are doing our share. That's all we want.

The train was an improvement on earlier trains, in that we had plenty of room to sit down—of course we travelled in day coaches, and the journey required two nights and a day. We

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still wore woolen, but many of us had discarded our coats. Our overcoats had been turned in.

39

During the Civil War, a State camp was at Readville, and there were soldiers who never went further. The phrase had lived over thirty years.

The greatest joy of a soldier is to eat. At many stops, particularly at Columbia, South Carolina, we got watermelons as we had never had them before.

I gave up headquarters details and went back into ranks and the color guard. I had a foolish notion that when we went into action the colors—as in the pictures—would be carried in front.

Charleston, S. C. July 7, 1898.

We are at Charleston, waiting in the train for orders to embark on the Columbia. We begin to feel quite like an army; there are troops here from Wisconsin, Kansas, and Kentucky. I don't think it will be long before you hear from me again,—it can't be that the government will neglect to arrange for mail transportation. No one was weakened by the trip; we are all strong and in good spirits.

I was wrong; our ship was the Yale.

I think that this was a short letter because I was having a busy day.

We arrived—as I later learned—at midnight. In the morning the glad news came that we were to be paid for the month of June. The paymaster quickly disposed of us and the question of disposing of the money then became paramount. We hinted to the Lieutenant Colonel—who was a sympathetic soul—that after the long car ride we ought to stretch our legs, to which he agreed on the sole condition that we stay in sight of the cars.

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So off we went. South Carolina was a so-called dispensary state, but we were advised that by joining a club we could get some beer. Various clubs were proposed, all on the basis of a ten cent admission fee, but out of loyalty to our home town, we chose the Concordia, and its membership book—if preserved—would contain a fairly good company roster.

In course of time, some of us went back to look at the train; it was still on the same siding, and with two or three companions I went up town to a music hall.

Early in the evening we went back to look at the train again. It had gone. We knew it had gone no further than the docks, and we went down on a street car, but too late—unfortunately—to escape notice.

We went to sleep on the plank floor of a dock, but I was soon sharply awakened. There had been a summary levy on the regiment for fifty or sixty men to load commissary supplies on a lighter for transfer to the troop ships; and our superiors thought that we who had relaxed during the afternoon in a music hall,—doing no harder work than a little dancing,—would be well fitted for the job.

41

In the midnight darkness we went to another pier and reported to a regular army captain. The rest of the detail were sleepily coming in from the other companies. On a nearby team track there were cars loaded with boxed and crated provisions; the lighter—an old, dismantled sailing vessel,—was tied up at the wharf.

A long plank had been placed as a runway from the deck to the lower hold; most of the men were ordered to carry the provisions from the cars to the deck of the lighter; a few more men took the boxes and “shot” them down the runway; and others stored them in the lower hold as they came down. But there was one post of particular distinction; somebody had to stand at the lower end of the long plank and *catch* the boxes; and the officer selected me.

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The men on the deck observed that if the boxes came down fast and in quick succession they would get some amusement out of my receiving operations; and it was so. Mike Kelly never took them faster behind the bat, and the many missiles that I missed went bouncing back through the hold.

Ultimately the captain took pity on me and transferred me to the porter department. I made a trip or two to the freight cars, but I was diverted by a convenient cotton bale and lay down for a little nap. I had had no such comfort for weeks; when I awoke it was broad daylight, and the lighter with the entire 42 detail on board was disappearing down the harbor past Fort Sumpter.

I knew that no roster had been made of the detail, and that I would not be missed. So I idled back to the company.

Off Cuba, July 11, 1898.

I hope that this can be mailed by the officers of the Yale when they get back for another load. We are coasting along the southern shore and shall arrive at the fleet anchorage off Santiago at about noon. The trip has been a dirty one, because we were so crowded, but the sea has been very smooth and there has been almost no sea-sickness. At Charleston, the Yale could not cross the bar and we were carried out in tugs and sea-going ferries. Then we lay to, and went up in long boats to the side. The sea was running pretty high at first, and the companion way could not be used,—they had to go up the side on a rope. This method didn't prove popular, and when the sea quieted they ran the lighters alongside and put a plank across. The ride down to the big boat, and the lying to, were too much for a good many stomachs, but the Yale is too steady to jar anybody much in such seas as we've had since. We have been through several very severe tropical thunder-storms, but they haven't kicked up any sea.

The first land we sighted was San Salvador,—doesn't it seem strange to be saying that?—then others of the Bahamas, and this morning the east end of Cuba was not a mile away. It is a wild, broken country, although the sailors say that the part we have seen so far is much less mountainous than the country around Santiago. It rises in terraces to a height of three or four hundred feet above the sea,—and here and there the cliffs are cut with sharp, deep ravines. Everything is green. The foliage seems to be a kind of shrubbery. Aside from a few fires, we have seen no signs of human life. The climate in this part of the world is different from anything I ever saw. The sky is never wholly overcast, nor ever wholly clear. Every few hours there is a pelting shower,—then hot sunshine. It never seems to rain at night. Most of us have slept on deck and not felt any dampness.

As a matter of fact there has been little choice in the matter of places to sleep. We have the steerage, and the deck. The steerage is poorly ventilated. In either place we sleep on the flooring, but that doesn't interfere with our sleeping well. The boat is not as clean as a regular man of war, and there has not been much chance to wash. Still, everybody seems well and in good spirits. Of course there are a few exceptions to both. X has the measles, and is to be sent back. Most of the fellows are well hardened and take good care of themselves.

The climatic dangers decrease as they get nearer. I don't believe it will be half as hot as it was in Virginia. The mail facilities will probable be ample. Whatever they turn out to be, I will write when I can.

44

As we lay to near the Yale, waiting for the sea to quiet down, the sailors from the Minnesota came up in their long boats and invited us to come over to our troop-ship. The sea was still running high, and the long boats were rearing and plunging, but there were those—including a senior field officer—who were lured by the steady Yale. When this particular field officer arrived alongside the Yale in a long boat he caught the rope thrown from the deck, just as the long boat rose on the crest of a wave. Instantly it dropped into

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the trough of a sea and he was left dangling. The long boat rose again and he tried to get a foothold, but he was again left in mid-air. Now he was kicking and wriggling and puffing, and I think the sailors deliberately tantalized him awhile, but finally he was hauled aboard the vessel.

It did sometimes rain at night. At first we slept under an awning that stretched from the deck house to the boat davits. During a squall the awning filled with rain water and bellied down so that it could not drain. Then came a gust of wind and emptied the whole contents on deck, washing out about half the company.

The Yale was not a transport, and had no accommodation for troops. We slept when we pleased, but on the whole the main deck was most satisfactory. The steerage was of the old fashioned type, a lower deck wholly unpartitioned. Poker games were soon organized down there, but no one had much money, 45 and the number of games and players gradually dwindled until there was a close corner on all the cash.

Off the Bahamas we had desultory rifle practice, shooting at boxes thrown overboard. It was surprising to discover men who had never fired a gun. This was the only rifle practice we had in the service.

Guantanamo, Cuba, July 18, 1898.

I have just heard that a dispatch boat leaves in about an hour for Key West, and will carry mail. As you will have seen, we are at Guantanamo, which is a harbor about forty miles east of Santiago, and is used as a headquarters for the American fleet. We are still on board the Yale, and expect to be for some time.

We sailed direct to Siboney from Charleston. Siboney is eight miles east of Santiago, an insignificant village, lying in a rift in the foothills that surround Cuba like a sea wall. It has no harbor, but a dozen war vessels and transports were lying off the shore. The water there is immensely deep, and no one attempts to anchor. The Yale lay to among the

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others, and except for an occasional trip of half a mile east or west we didn't leave Siboney till yesterday morning. From our station we could see the top of Morro castle, and watch the warships steam up and down the harbor mouth, but not a hostile shot has been fired within our sight or sound. All sorts of rumors have come aboard, but our communication with shore has been very restricted, 46 and we *know* nothing. One day it was understood that the bombardment of Morro was to begin; the fleet formed, and we received orders to land west of the city. We were fallen in on deck, waiting for the fleet to move, when after much signalling among the ships, the news came aboard that Santiago had fallen, and the fleet sailed off to the east.

We have been protected very carefully from yellow fever,—so carefully that Gen. Miles, the only man ashore from this vessel, had extreme difficulty in getting back again. Yellow fever seems to have appeared at Siboney, and in the army in camp before Santiago. From our deck we could see them burning the houses that are infected. Before they had finished the job, there was hardly a building left.

At Siboney —, —, and — were sent to the hospital. X had mumps, — had measles, and — is generally run down. They won't be allowed to rejoin us because of the possibility of their carrying infection. Y has the mumps, but he is still aboard ship. He was very much run down anyway, but looked better when I saw him last. Of course you won't tell anybody these things unless they are generally known in Concord already. I have no doubt that there are lots of absurd rumors round about us. The fact is that with these exceptions, and the cases of —, —, —, and —, who have sea-sickness, homesickness, and indigestion combined, we are all 47 remarkably well. Bathing is compulsory and popular;—and the food is really sufficient though perhaps not satisfactory to everybody. As usual, I am well and lively.

We came to Guantanamo to be landed, but there is a little fever near here, and there is a hitch about landing us. I rather doubt our going ashore. I should like to, though; it is a

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pretty place,—no village except the military camp, but pretty from a scenic standpoint. The country near here is lower,—less mountainous,—and there is a fine harbor.

I must stop; the mail is closing.

Our proposed point of attack was Sacopa battery, a fortification somewhere on the west side of the Santiago channel. What a slaughter we escaped!

A day or two before this particular event, someone had discovered that in one of the lower holds there was a very excellent supply of canned goods, provided for the naval officers' mess. By some means unknown to me, a considerable number of cans had passed into the possession of the rank and file; but on orders to fall in for a landing in force, some appetites waned and canned goods were left lying on deck. This was too much for certain thrifty individuals; they gathered up the cans and strung them on ropes from their belts or haversacks, so that here and there there was a man with a pendant of provisions reaching to his feet. They looked like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, but who would not fardels bear for salmon, 48 and sardines, and mock-turtle soup, after boiled beans three times a day?

The Yale was the temporary headquarters of General Miles, commanding the army.

Guantanamo, Cuba, July 20, 1898.

If I remember right, I wrote you last from here after we arrived, and was cut off just as I had started to tell you about the place. Guantanamo is a very different place from Siboney. At Siboney the mountains rise almost vertically from the water's edge; here, for five miles back, the land is low and rolling, and the mountains rise much more gradually. At Siboney, there is nothing that can be called a harbor; here there is nothing but harbor. I learn from the map,—as you probably have,—that a river empties here, and that fifteen miles above us there is a Spanish city,—St. Catalina,—of fifteen thousand people. But from the deck of our ship, there is not a house in sight.

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This is the headquarters of the American fleet. At present there are at anchor here the Oregon, Iowa, Massachusetts, Indiana, for battleships, the New York, Nashville, Newark, Marblehead, and Brooklyn for cruisers, the freak Texas, and four torpedo boats, including the Vesuvius. Then there are a half dozen supply boats and colliers, and perhaps six troopers. The troopers are loaded with regiments which we suppose are going to Porto Rico, but we suppose lots of things and get fooled; so I am not posing as a prophet.

49

On shore close to us, is a little Cuban military camp, and behind it, on a hill, is the camp of the marines who got mixed up with the Spaniards, early in the war. Away off toward the hills we just see the brown walls of a Spanish fort, and through the glasses we can see soldiers and cannon. They are very unmolested; and very useful in enabling me to say that I have lain sight of hostile guns for a week. Last night a sailor brought aboard the lower jaw of a Spaniard killed up here on the hill. That added another volume to my war record.

We lie here like a whole boat-load of Ancient Mariners. The boat is fully as idle as a painted ship; it never rains; we have to hustle for a drink of water; and there are even games of poker, though I don't think they play for quite such high stakes here. The present indications are that we'll be quite as fit, some day, to stretch out our skinny bodies in grocery stores, and lie about the sea.

What I have told you about our life aboard ship is still applicable. But we have become more accustomed to it, and there is less complaining. X is said to be improving; — is very sick, in the hospital. Aside from that, everybody is about the same.

I haven't learned anything new about Cuba except that the rainy season is a fake. It hasn't rained for eight days, and the weather is delightful. I sleep on deck now, every night, because the air is so much better there.

50

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We hear that five hundred of us have been killed. Of course none of you believe any such foolish rumor as that. Don't believe any newspaper accounts of battles, because they can't get them. You will never get a reliable account of an action except by mail, and if I run afoul of any I will write you all about it. Of course you understand how to address letters,—Co. I., 6th Mass. Key West.

Life aboard ship was becoming very irksome. In civil life the Yale was the passenger liner City of Paris; she had been taken over for service as an auxiliary cruiser, but without change except the mounting of a few small calibre guns. She was assigned to transport duty solely in an emergency, and with no notion that we would remain on board more than three or four days. There were about 1,500 of us. The main deck and the steerage were crowded.

Someone discovered a passage into the second class cabins, which were unoccupied. A few of us moved there for a few days, and used the bunks; for washing we lowered a tomato can through a port hole on a string, and baled up the ocean. The cabins were hot and stuffy; we finally gave them up.

From these cabins there was a companionway leading to the galley. We had received our khaki uniforms on shipboard, but here and there a man had kept his woolen clothes. The blue coats had no market value, but the trousers were salable to the 51 marines, and trade relations were accordingly established with the cooks in the galley, on the basis of a pan of biscuits for a pair of pants.

Enroute to Porto Rico, July 23, 1898.

There is one letter in the bag for you now, but I want to have the Yale carry you as late news as possible, although there isn't much, except the pardonable chestnut that I am feeling like a fighting cock. We expect that by tomorrow we shall be on terra firma again, somewhere near San Juan. Blessed the thought. I am very willing to get back to where

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I'm not hemmed in by the rail of a crowded vessel, and where I can indulge myself in the luxury of sleeping on anything but boards. To be sure, I have had the use of a state-room most of the time, but the air below is always close, and I have preferred to sleep on deck. It will be the salvation of the regiment.

After dinner.—

We have just been told that our work is to be that of establishing a base of supplies somewhere on the island. Our force numbers thirty-five hundred. A while after we have done our work, thirty thousand troops are to be sent to do the aggressive fighting. Until they get there, there will be no attack on San Juan or any other fortified place.

You will be reassured to know that — is out again, thinner and perhaps weaker, but 52 much less tired. The sickness has done him good. X, —, and — are likely to go back with the Yale. Y and — are used up generally, not strong enough for the life. Z had appendicitis; he is pulling through, but of course will be too weak for campaigning. He is a big strapping fellow, but always had a weakness to abdominal troubles. W is on the sick list, only temporarily, however. Of course you will be careful about letting these things get round.

The regiment lost a man this morning, Parker, a corporal in A. He had typhoid fever, contracted like the rest at Alger. He was buried at sea. I shall never forget the solemnity,—the sobering influence,—of that service. I knew Parker pretty well, and realize what a loss he must have been. He was mature, intelligent, and strong.

We had a mail just before we sailed out of Guantanamo. The latest letter I had was dated the eighth.

Don't be uneasy if letters don't come. The boats will run very uncertainly for a while. But when they do run, they'll carry a letter home.

At last we were on our way. The fleet moved in two columns, led by the flagship Iowa. During the day we were in sight of the coast of Haiti. At nightfall all lights, but one, were extinguished; the vessels were guided by the dim lantern at the masthead of the flagship.

53

It was a still, dark, tropic night. Beyond the rail, save for the tiny light on the masthead of the Iowa, there was a dense blackness. We heard only the measured churning of the engines, driven at half-speed, and the ripple of the waves against the vessel's side. The men talked in undertones. We believed that in the morning we would face enemy fire. A little group gathered astern and gently sung the familiar songs of the Civil War.

Guanica, Porto Rico, July 27, 1898.

I have just heard that a mail goes in an hour. My paper has not been unpacked; this is the best I can do. We are camped comfortably on the plain where the village of Guanica lies, within a quarter of a mile of the shore. There is a fine, though small, harbor here, filled now with transports and war vessels. The level land is perhaps a mile wide, and runs back two to the foothills. The scenery, climate, and vegetable growth are delightful. The village is neat and civilized-looking; most of the inhabitants have got out. There was slight resistance at first; but the marines and the Gloucester's guns cleared the shore. Our company was detailed to guard stores and prisoners,—that is, until last evening. The first and second battalions had a little skirmishing in the hills, and a few men were slightly wounded. Last night word came of a possible night attack from San Juan, and we went out with all the others. My squad 54 was on picket line,—the best we could do was to kill a horse that proved to be riderless when we got closer. There were a few Spaniards round, but no real fighting. There won't be. We outnumber them, and they won't ever face us. I am actually enjoying the life here.

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There was keen rivalry to be first ashore, but we were unlucky. We spent the first night on the porches of buildings near the water-front. Then we made camp, and used our “dog-tents” for the first time, and for the first time did our individual cooking.

There were no docks at Guanica. Men and freight were landed by boats and lighters. The beach was very shoal. We took advantage of the excellent bathing until someone yelled “sharks.” In the shallow water it was doubtful whether swimming or running was more expeditious, but by one method or the other or a floundering combination of both, several hundred men emerged from the water with amazing speed.

Guanica, Porto Rico, July 29, 1898.

The corner in writing paper has been broken at last; a Y. M. C. A. man opened his pack this morning, and everybody has paper now.

I have lost track of the days of the week, entirely—but I think we sighted land Monday 55 morning. From the sea there was nothing to be seen but a narrow break in the coast hills. We lay off a mile or so, while the little Gloucester steamed ahead and finally disappeared into the harbor's mouth. Then we heard her guns a few times, and she came out to signal. Everything seemed to be all right; they began to land the troops from all the transports. We got in about four in the afternoon. Inside the harbor the hills receded, leaving a land locked basin a mile across. Along the beach directly opposite the ocean stood a row of stores and houses, perhaps half a dozen in all. Each one of them had a broad covered piazza in front, most were painted, and some had cement steps and rails. Back from the ocean ran the principal street, straight as a die away out to the foot hills. A half mile back on this street was the centre, church, school, and arsenal. The church was a typical Spanish building, of crumbling white cement, with a chime of three bells on top. The other buildings were like those on the beach, one story, with broad piazzas. The village lay on a perfect plain, a mile or so wide, and two deep. Beyond, on all sides, rose the hills, their slopes checkered with farms and orchards. Here and there we could see rows of cocoanut palms,

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clumps of cedars, orchards of banana plants, or big banyans. There was much color and much picturesqueness. The inhabitants had fled at first, and are just beginning to come back, shouting "Viva Americanos," and doing their best to be subservient. They are a servile, lazy-looking lot, all dressed in linen and straw hats, and all smoking incessant cigarettes. The few Spanish soldiers had retreated to the hills; they had left as fast as they could when the marines got ashore after them. Our company was detailed to guard the stores and whatever prisoners were taken. We had hardly men enough, and it meant a hard night's work. I sat up with the prisoners,—a hungry lot of natives that somebody had suspected of something. Their Spanish is poor, and mine is still in nebulo, but I managed to find out, with French, Latin, English and deaf and dumb, that we were at Wah-ni-ca, that from here to San Juan was eighty miles, seven days on foot, or four if trains were used as far as possible, that the next town was "Yeouw-ko," beyond that "Ponce," that Ponce was bigger than San Juan, and connected with various places by rail, and that there were 500 soldiers at Ponce and 10,000 at San Juan.

Tuesday we pitched camp with the rest of the regiment, just back of "Beach Street." We put up our dog-tents of course. They are the ones we carry with us, big enough for two men to sleep in. There had been firing all night, in the hills, and a sharp skirmish in the morning. Later we heard that the second battalion had been ambushed on the way to an outpost, and had a little brush with no loss except an injury to Capt. Barrett, resulting from the barbs of a wire fence. In the morning the first battalion had a bigger fight. They had been stationed two miles out, toward Ponce. In the morning the 57 companies had assembled to swap stations. Just when they were together the Spaniards opened a cross fire from the hills, wounding four including Capt. Gihon. The companies deployed and drove the enemy back, killing two and wounding thirteen.

Word came at six in the evening that the enemy was advancing in force, infantry and cavalry. Half the company was left to do guard duty, and the others started for the front with the rest of the regiment, the Sixth Illinois, and the regular infantry and artillery,—all the strength we had. For awhile we stood in the road, and had a slight chance to experience

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the sensation Mr. Bartlett used to tell about, listening to the shots in front, seeing the wounded going in, and wondering when our turn would come. Pretty soon Butler Ames told the captain to send twenty-five men in chain—to connect the pickets with the reserve, and to guard against a flank movement along the south slope. The first three squads were sent, mine furthest out. We spread out through the woods, a hundred yards apart, and waited. The last man couldn't find the pickets, but we had to stay just the same. Occasionally we could hear a shot or two, but there was no sharp firing. About nine, Arthur Armstrong, who was three men below me, on a dark road, heard a horse's footsteps near him. The horse single-footed down the path right toward Armstrong, but the road was so dark that he couldn't see anything but the black mass. When the time came, he shouted "halt" twice. The 58 horse slowed down, stopped, and then getting no answer Armstrong fired over to scare the rider into saying something. When he heard the gun, the horse turned and ran back. I could hear the whole performance, and hadn't a doubt that there was a rider. We sent the story down and waited some more. At ten they called us in. Just as those of us who were above him were crossing Armstrong's post, we heard the hoof beats again, way up the road. It was too dark there to see anything, but we waited. The horses stopped almost out of hearing. Arthur and I went up the road to find out what it was. We thought that there was Spanish cavalry round, and there was nothing to prevent them getting down that road and cutting in behind the outpost if we didn't stop them. We went perhaps a hundred yards. Then we heard the sound of half a dozen horses' feet, coming at a gallop. Arthur and I ran back to ambush with the others. We had just time. I was nearest the horses, and when the black mass loomed up not twenty feet away I yelled to halt. They did not stop and when they were within ten feet, I saw that they were riderless. At the same time three of the boys fired. I tried to stop them, but the fun had begun and seven of them emptied their guns. All the horses but one turned and ran. One was badly hit, and had fallen. Two of the boys shot him,—poor fellow,—and we went in. Our skirmish is quite a joke now.

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We got a good night's rest that night. The next day, in the afternoon, our company was 59 ordered to an outpost,—the one where the scrapping had been. We got there at five. I took four men to two posts at the extremity of our lines, and went to work watching for Spaniards that never came. I stayed up all night; I had to. My men had a half night's sleep apiece. Nothing happened. There were a few shots, and a few signal lights, and a couple of houses burnt, but nothing near us. The next day we had a chance to see the inside country. There are some fine plantations, lots of sugar and tobacco, good roads, and fair houses. We had cocoanuts, green bananas (which we made into fritters), mangroves,—a sweet, pulpy, yellow fruit that is delicious,—molasses, and all the cigars and cigarettes we could carry. The natives have found out that the soldiers have orders to pay for everything they take and five cents will buy anything. The company came in last night. I stayed out with Jake Giblin to guard the cooking outfit and stores, and had them brought in on an ox team today. We are in our dog tents again now, but we shall move toward Ponce, which has been taken, tomorrow. The lines were extended four miles beyond us yesterday, when we were on outpost.

The weather here is delightful. We had our first hard rain today. I was just unloading the team, and got a little wet, but the sun dried me in five minutes. We seem to have got rid of all our sick. There are none with us now who seem to have any ailments. I think it is because of the excellent bathing, the fine air, and the 60 fresh meat that is killed for us. I had a glass of native milk today,—the first milk I've had for a month. I tell you it was good. As usual, I am well and comfortable. I make up daytimes for whatever sleep I lose, and have learned to get up at five without a kick. My clothes hold out well, and I'm all right.

Our skirmish with the horses was more than a joke. The volley of shots was heard at the General's headquarters, and he sent an aide with reinforcements. Richard Harding Davis, who was with the expedition as a war correspondent and wrote a book about the war, used the incident as an illustration of tenderfoot nervousness.

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I don't believe my description of the flora and fauna was very accurate, but I was no worse than others. I heard one fellow stoutly insisting that a mongoose flew over his tent and quacked.

I was temporarily serving as a lance-corporal,—which is the lowest order of vertebrae. My two outposts were in the bush, half a mile apart. One of them was manned by an Irishman, a Norwegian, and a Sioux Indian,—Joe Dubray, who had played football at Carlisle and later worked on a farm in Lincoln. His eyesight at night was marvelous.

I didn't write the whole story of our night beyond the lines. One of the boys had overindulged in “ron viejo,” and could not move or be moved. There 61 was a nearby field of sugar cane, planted in wide rows and standing higher than our heads, so that between the rows there were ample aisles completely hidden from view. There we all slept comfortably.

Ponce, Porto Rico, August 2, 1898.

At last we've reached Ponce, after three days of hard marching. I wrote last from Guanica, —Friday. That night I slept in camp,—an unusual experience for me. The first and second battalions had received marching orders, but the understanding was that we were to remain behind temporarily as garrison. At about seven Saturday morning, I and F companies were told to get ready to move with the others in twenty minutes. Luckily our worldly possessions are so reduced that we didn't have much difficulty. In an hour we were on the road. We marched ten or twelve miles that day,—to Yauco, and went into camp there at about two. It had been a terrific experience; of our company only thirteen kept up. The rest lagged behind, because of heat prostration, or sore feet, or simple physical inability to keep up. I didn't have much trouble staying in the procession,—principally because I had systematically pared my load down to lowest terms. Yauco is a large interior town—very suggestive in its appearance of Mexico and such places. The inhabitants shouted “Viva Americanos” till our ears rang. It wasn't very gratifying; they were partly

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afraid of us, and 62 partly after our good American money. Still, there is a large element, particularly noticeable in the villages and among the poor, who long for American rule. The stories they tell of Spanish atrocity are awful. In camp at Yauco we ate our second meal for the day, bathed, and slept. Early the next morning we pulled up again, and started east. That day we covered a good twelve miles,—up hills, down hills, and through fords innumerable. The fords were the trials; wetting the feet in the shoes, and then marching for hours without a chance to dry them, starts blisters by the dozen. I never saw such a hard looking lot of feet as the boys brought into camp with them that night. Twenty-six of us held out that day; the rest came in later. We camped near a little village in the hills, and made our beds under banana trees. Then we scoured the country for hens, turkeys, corn, cocoanuts, and water. Water is always abundant; every little village has its cement-lined brick aqueduct. At about seven we had a little supper and turned in. At about eight Jake Giblin and I turned out again to fry up a little liver taken from the beast they had just killed for breakfast. At about two in the morning I woke to a full realization of the fact that too fresh meat doesn't always digest easily. Having mastered that principle of hygiene I went to sleep again and slept until it was time to get ready for another day's work. We started at seven; one man who couldn't stand it any longer was sent back to the Yauco camp by rail. Our company was detailed 63 as rear guard, and I had sacrificed principle to comfort and hired a bundle carrier for a quarter, which made it easier still. We walked all day, over twelve miles, and marched through Ponce into camp at about six. Not many fell out yesterday, because the pace was slower, but it was a pretty tired crowd that threw off its bundles here last night. We didn't see much of the city, but from what little we passed through, I got the impression that Ponce is much more Spanish than any other place we have seen. There was less "Viva," and more significant silence; and the people are less colored, and the buildings are better and more Moorish in style. The camp is a good one as such camps go, though hardly like Framingham or Hingham. We weren't long getting to sleep. Altogether it had been a tough experience. A veteran of the civil war, 54 years old and a member of Co. E, told me that in four years he never saw green men marched as hard. I never expect to be strained so again. We don't know what our next move is to

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be. They are examining the men this morning for disability, and the rumor is that we are going on to San Juan, but I doubt it. Rumors are uncertain; last evening, in twenty minutes, I heard that the whole of company I was going on guard, that Schley had reduced Havana, that Spain had thrown up the sponge, that San Juan had surrendered, and that Dewey had sunk three German vessels at Manila. We are pretty well out of the world.

64

We left Guanica with eighty-eight men in the ranks. Ultimately they all came in. We were very “soft” and badly conditioned after long confinement aboard ship, and our equipment was very heavy. We had been issued over a hundred rounds of forty-five calibre ammunition. I threw away most of mine.

Of course we were now doing our own cooking. We were issued hardtack, salt pork, and coffee beans. We ground the beans between rocks, or cooked them whole. Hardtack, fried in pork, was a great delicacy. But occasionally we also had fresh beef, and there was plenty of fruit.

Ponce, Thursday, August 5, 1898.

My letter of three days ago has not yet gone—so I can add to it to date. This morning, we are still in camp at Ponce. Well rested by this time, and about ready for another cross-country run.

A good deal that is sensational has happened since we have been here,—all culminating in the enforced resignations of Col. Woodward, Lt. Col. Chaffin, Maj. Taylor, Chaplain Dusseault, and Capt. Goodell of Co. K. Last night the officers trudged out of camp, the most melancholy sight I ever saw. Since then we've settled down again to the routine,—wondering what is to happen next. There was a flurry last evening of news that 1,000 Spanish were advancing on Yanco where Maj. Darling is military governor. We expected to go as reinforcements, 65 but they evidently don't intend to send us. We hear that the war is practically over, but hardly dare believe it. We are getting time now to look around

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a little. Yesterday, I went down to the city, drove a four ox team about a mile and a half, had a sail in the harbor with Maj. Dow, and ate a few native dishes. Everybody seems well again except for the few colds here and there. Some of the fellows are a good deal worked up over centipedes and their perapatetic inclinations. For my part I can't believe there are any centipedes here anyway. Every crawling bug isn't a centipede, by a long shot.

I have stricken out my explanation of the retirement of the officers. We did not certainly know the actual circumstances,—I doubt if they have ever been publicly known. The Chaplain was particularly popular, and we felt a kind of filial affection for the Lieutenant Colonel.

It may be said, however, that discipline throughout the command was extremely lax. This was due in part to the political structure of the militia, in part to the free-and-easy intimacy among all ranks retained from their relations in civil life, and in part to the circumstance that none of the line or field officers had ever had any military training. Under the original regime, every one did about as he pleased; we were glad to accommodate, but no one felt that he was under any compulsion.

The camp at Ponce was pitched in an old cane field. The stalks had been cut away, but the stumps 66 stuck into one's ribs at night. I changed my mind about the centipedes. They crawled into our haversacks and hid behind the hardtack.

At Ponce our Springfield rifles were replaced by Krag-Jorgensons. The Krag was a modern repeating rifle of thirty calibre, firing five shots from a clip. It was a long range gun, and of course, vastly better than the antiquated Springfields. Its only apparent defect was a tendency to rust and clog in wet weather. In this respect the Mauser—used by the Spaniards—was said to be superior; but the Mauser could not be used as a single shot gun,—the clip had to be shot out, so that cartridges could not be held in reserve in the gun. The Krag could be used as a single shot gun while a full clip was held in reserve.

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Adjuntas, Aug. 12, 1898.

I'll put a letter in the bag today—though it will be only one of quite a collection that will all be mailed at once. We are at Adjuntas now—a little town just north of Ponce, and just at the foot of the mountain pass. We are to rest here for a day or two, to wait for the baggage to catch up. This will give me time for a letter.

I wrote you last from Ponce. We got orders Monday to be ready Tuesday. Monday I spent in town, helping on a purchase of shoes for the quartermaster's supplies, and incidentally taking a few pictures. I got back at ten—the company 67 had gone out on outpost over night. Down under my wagon—where I was spending my nights—I found a deserter from the regulars trying to hide. I turned him over to the guard and took his bed.

Early Tuesday we struck camp and I am traveling with the wagon train, to help the quartermaster, who has charge of transportation. The first day we marched ten miles,—all up the mountain. It was a hard pull for the teams. We are using ox-carts entirely. They are two-wheeled carts drawn by two, four, or six oxen, according to the load. No yokes like ours are used here. The yoke is a straight bar, tied with thongs to the horns. The drivers are of course all natives. They use an ox-goad, dialect, and profanity—all in profusion. They seem never happy unless they are jabbing the flank of a bull and yelling “ow-amocarajo” at the top of their lungs.

Tuesday I spent in getting the trains up hill, shifting the oxen from one to another on the steep places, and gesticulating at the drivers. The regiment had gone on ahead and camped near a coffee-mill that is the center of a little village called Guaraguaos. It had been intensely hot after we got in from the coast, and there were a good many heat prostrations. The wagons got in at all hours from six until midnight. Some oxen had died, some were sick, and some teams had broken down. I slept with the company on the cement floor of the coffee-mill 68 under the stars. In the morning I went down to see the view.

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At noon we started again, in a rain storm. The military road ended at our camp; for the next few miles the road was the steepest and roughest I ever saw, up hill and down hill, always crooked and always stony. It rained hard several times in the afternoon. After much shifting of oxen I got my wagons as far as a ford that was about a half mile from camp; but they could not go through until the flood subsided. At about eight I left the wagons and hunted up the company. It was stowed away in a musty-smelling sugar warehouse. The fellows' rolls, including blankets and spare clothes, were on wagons two or three miles back. The fellows were wet through and had nothing but their rubber blankets for warmth. It was a dismal prospect, and much more dismal for the companies that couldn't get shelter, and had been obliged to camp in mud outside. We made beds of big dried banana leaves and went to sleep.

That night a funny thing happened. There was a loft in the building,—a rickety affair, entered by a trap door and ladder. The place was crowded with soldiers, asleep in the dried leaves. Sometime in the night somebody heard a peculiar noise,—nobody knows what. He had a vague idea that it was a tarantula, and yelled “tarantulas.” A half dozen fellows jumped up, and the noise of their treading in the dried leaves woke up everybody upstairs and down. Downstairs it sounded like breaking timber, and about 69 a dozen—including the Captain—made a break for the door. This settled it; there was a general stampede. Outside there were two companies just front of the building. They thought the camp was attacked and jumped over the bank of the ravine. By the time we fully understood what was going on, everybody was sneaking in again. It's hard—now—to find anybody who ran out, but as Mark Cronan said, as we lay down again in the darkness, “I didn't hear nothing about blistered feet that time.”

The wagon train moved at about eleven in the morning. It had been cut down half, and was consequently better able to keep up. The 6th Illinois baggage was and still is behind. The regiment followed us two hours later and almost caught us. The march was five or six miles, first up hill, then a little down, then level. We are comfortably camped on a side

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hill, just out of Adjuntas, which is a little town smaller than Yauco, but larger than the mill settlements we have just passed.

We are fast learning how to live on the march. Much that was superfluous has been thrown away. For instance, I am carrying a towel, a toothbrush, and one pair of stockings. On warm days like today, I can wash and dry my underclothes and drawers in two hours, wearing my blue shirt in the meantime. My brown coat has long been a thing of the past. Up to today we have been steadily dropping sick or weak men,—altogether the company has lost about twenty. But those who are left are well cared for, and those who go on are strong and healthy.

70

The climate still remains delightful. It is cool and inclined to be rainy, in the mountains, but the air is as fresh as any I have ever breathed. I supposed I never was so high up before.

At Adjuntas we made camp on a very steep hillside. During the night there was a violent rain storm, and the water coursed in little rivulets down hill and under the dog tents. One man went to sleep on his hands and knees, spanning a stream of water like a bridge.

Below the hill there was a level, fenced field. During the day the commissary rounded up six or seven beef cattle, and turned them into the field for slaughtering. Some of us were invited to do the killing, which was to be accomplished with rifles; the spectators sat on the side-hill, as at a bull fight.

We ventured into the field, and fired our Krag. But the bullets merely angered the animals. Unless they found a vital spot, Krag bullets were not destructive. With snorting bulls at our heels we ran for the fence,—I did, anyway. Then someone found a solitary Springfield in the stores, and the poor beasts were blown to pieces,—but by marksmen discreetly shooting from outside the fence.

Utuado, P. R., August 18, 1898.

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A letter from Louise has just come,—immensely welcome because it is the first since 71 July 8. Her letter was written August second, and from its silence on the subject of peace I assume that at that date nothing definite had developed, in spite of innumerable rumors to the contrary. We are awaiting now at Utuado, held there by a truce for an indefinite period.

Utuado is a little inland city between Ponce and Arecibo, and in the valley between the north and south ranges. We are waiting here, apparently until peace negotiations are brought to a result. We don't *know* anything, but persistent rumors, and what we read from newspapers a couple of weeks old, convince us that the end is not far off. We *know* that a truce has been declared,—our outposts are protected by a flag of truce, and we are awaiting its suspension so that we can advance.

Our march from Ponce was an eventful one. I wrote you from Adjuntas. We stayed there a day,—the wettest, muddiest, dirtiest day I ever lived. In the morning we started for the north again. Our wagons were left behind, with the Sixth Illinois and our third battalion to guard them. The rest of us, followed by the pack-mules, marched 18 miles to this town. The march was through fords, up mountains, and through passes so narrow that two men could scarcely walk abreast, with almost vertical cliffs on one side and almost vertical precipices on the other. I never conceived of such magnificent scenery. It was a hard march, but the regiment stood it wonderfully. I can't believe, now, 72 that we walked half of 18 miles, but the authorities are positive.

Our camp here is in a meadow, along the bank of the Arecibo River. The river here is just about as wide as the Concord, but shallow, strong, and swift. The valley is beautiful,—green and luxuriant, and shut in on all sides by steep mountains, covered with dense tropical foliage. But I can't say much for the weather. It rains a little to a good deal every day, and more often a good deal than a little. The dog tents prove to be fairly good shelter, and no one gets very wet, though my idea of what very wet means may be affected by experience. There are a good many slight colds, but nothing serious; all our weak are

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beyond the mountains. With all its faults, the medical department has always been prompt to send back a man who is too weak to go ahead, which is a great comfort.

We aren't living a very gay life here. Most of our time is spent in keeping as compact as possible inside of dog tents, and talking over the latest rumors. You can never know how they fly around this camp. But there are those who are still humorous, and there is a band that plays, and there is unlimited good tobacco for the asking, and if a man has it in him, there is enough to enjoy. We shall be at Arecibo in a few days,—after that, no one knows.

Just as we reached Utuado a truce was declared and outposts on both sides were under white flags. 73 This ultimately proved to be the end of the war, but we knew little about affairs in the world at large.

For the first time since leaving Guanica, we were plainly in touch with the Spanish forces. It was said that our forced march from Adjuntas was to forestall a Spanish advance.

The camp was selected and laid out with the worst possible judgment. The ground sloped gradually from the road to the river. The company streets ran down the slope. The soil was very soft, and after heavy rains the constant treading up and down the streets churned the surface into ankle-deep mud. The latrines were dug near the road, at the *top* of the slope, and their contents drained down hill and infiltrated the muddy streets.

I had a personal reason for being gloomy. In an impulse of Spartan hardihood I had given my dog-tent to George Lee, intending to rely on my rubber blanket for shelter. It didn't work very well; in fact, it didn't work at all. There was a boulder outcropping in the company street, and one day I was observed sitting there, in a rain storm, apparently very much amused. On inquiry I explained that I was thinking about my clean, dry bedroom in Concord, and considering whether I had been a damned fool to leave it.

Utuado, P. R., August 22, 1898.

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Though I have nothing to tell except the old story of wait, wait, wait, I know that you will be reassured to hear even that, told in a way to indicate that I still have nothing to complain of. We are still camping here at Utuado. The rainy season, which I once pronounced to be a fake, has proved to be all that is claimed for it. Our camp is a very poor one, and efforts are being made to get us into a better one, or into barracks. For two days buildings have been ready for us in town, but official indifference keeps us here. Life in such wet quarters is making much sickness, though none of it is very serious as yet. I caught a cold last week that promptly went to my little insides, but I am in such a hardy condition that I threw it off like a red hot coal. X is sick again, apparently with malaria. There are probably fifty cases as bad or worse than mine was; on the whole we aren't on just such an "armed picnic" as the esteemed editor of the Transcript seems to think. I enclose a clipping from which I quoted.

We had lots of mail last week. But we still know nothing of the peace negotiations, or of our future. Our last papers were those of Aug. 4, and brought news of a retraction on Spain's part. Rumors fly thick and fast, but none are reliable.

If there seems to be no likelihood of our coming home, I should like another roll of films. Money is scarce, but I hardly dare risk it in the mails. Our paper sells for \$1.75, and our coin for \$2.00 in the Porto Rican tender. There is nothing to buy but food, and very little of that; so poverty is rather a relief.

75

This country is a paradise for sketching. I wish I had paper, and an opportunity. Everything is just ragged enough for me. There are some fine old churches, and some fine old cemetery gates. Everything else is just uncouth enough to be picturesque.

Louise is wrong in suspecting that I haven't told the whole truth. I say now,—frankly,—that we are living in a very dangerous way. But it is the first time. Some of the marches

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were hard, but aside from them there has been nothing that was not to be expected as a necessary part of campaign life.

Our new colonel is slashing right and left, bound to make regulars of us. He is an excellent officer, and will have a fine regiment.

At Utuado Colonel Rice took command of the regiment. He was a great soldier with a most interesting history. He had served as a volunteer in the Civil War, had been taken prisoner and escaped, and had been signally honored for bravery on the battlefield. After the Civil War he had obtained a lieutenancy in the regular army, and had served continuously ever since, but advancement had been so slow that he had progressed only to the rank of Captain. When our colonelcy became vacant he was appointed by the Governor to command us as a colonel of volunteers, but retained his captain's rank in the regulars.

76

He arrived on a Saturday evening, and immediately ordered "church" Sunday afternoon. We hadn't had church or a chaplain for a month, but there was a Y. M. C. A. man along with us—a charming man, by the way,—who was to conduct the services.

We had a regimental dog,—Dewey,—a mongrel bitch that had been picked up by someone along the way. Dewey had a genius for entangling *affaires du coeur*, and was always a center of entertainment.

Promptly at the appointed time for church, the new Colonel, very spick and span, strode out of his tent. He observed a throng of soldiers nearby, and asked the sentinel:

"Is that church?"

"Hell, no," said the sentinel, "that's Dewey."

Utuado, Aug. 26, 1898.

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Just to amuse myself I have been trying a little sketching from our front piazza.

We moved yesterday up into the town, and are quartered in barracks near the Plaza. Here we live an ideal life—a roof to sleep under, no particular work to do and no distance to walk for our meals. But our stay here will be of short duration. In a very few days we are going through to Arecibo unless something very unexpected changes our orders. Our ultimate fate is still entirely problematical. Our brigadier Garretson wants the brigade relieved, but Col. Rice may be of a different opinion. While at 77 camp near here guesses were innumerable. Then the camp became so unhealthful that plans were made to barrack us in town. While these plans were being perfected Col. Rice was suddenly called to Ponce to confer with Miles. Since he had been there a telegram has come notifying us that clothing which we have ordered will be sent to us at Arecibo. Since then we have moved into town and the Illinois regiment has struck camp to move to Ponce. This is all that any of us know about our fate. But it leads me to the inference that we are going to be detached from the Brigade and go to Arecibo alone. When we get there, I'll guess again. I don't know—now—how we stand with Spain.

The town here is a quaint old place, the least altered and most typical town we have seen. It lies in a cup-like valley—just where the Arecibo river receives a tributary brook. As you approach from the west, you see first of all the gray wall of the village cemetery. The road curves around this and straightens out to become the principal street. First you pass native huts, thatched sometimes with big dried banana leaves, and crowded with half clothed children that gather at the doors to see you pass, their bronzed little stomachs sticking out like the boilers of locomotives. The old folks—not because they are less curious—but because they are more lazy—stay in the background—swinging in home-made hammocks, both sexes alike smoking black cigars. I saw in a Spanish primer in a dialogue these sentiments: “He is fifty years 78 old—It is a great age.” It is, in this climate. At ten the children look careworn and at forty the women are as ugly as Ulrica.

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People of this kind crowd around you as you enter town—past the shacks and into the zone of coffee houses. They are built generally by foreign capital, are well made and modern looking, though with shutters in place of glass—all characteristic of the locality. Beyond the coffee houses, the stores begin, and mixed in among the stores the better dwelling houses, differing in that they have piazzas—sometimes on the first floor—sometimes on the second—and sometimes on both. These buildings are generally of masonry—coated with white plaster, two stories high—and without attempt at ornamentation excepting the severe door and window heads,—made, like all the rest, of white plaster. From the stores and dwellings there is the same crowd staring out—but it is of whiter complexion and better clothed. By this time the buildings are close together. There are sidewalks, and there are ponies carrying baskets on each flank standing at the curbs.

Where the buildings become better, the cross streets begin—running from the group of huts on the hill on the south to the brook on the north. After a half mile of the better buildings, the street enters the Plaza—the conventional center of every Porto Rican town. The Plaza de San Miguel, as this one is called, is perhaps as large as the square around the soldiers monument at home—rectangular, and divided into halves. The western half is a clear paved space, 79 crowded to the limits of its stone fence every morning with the ponies that bring in the milk, eggs, and corn of the country. The other half is a garden, radiant with tropical shrubs. And overlooking it all, from a rising ground supported by an old gray retaining wall, is the cathedral—a simple building well designed at first, and improved by the gradual crumbling of the masonry. It has two spires, one still bearing a primitive set of chimes, but the other spotted like a blind eye, with a white-faced electric clock. Around the plaza and on the principal street corners, there are stores where they sell rum, cigars, rice, and sometimes sugar, but very little else, and very little of these for that matter except to the Americans. There is one hotel, the Hotel Antial, an open-doored, hospitable looking place where for 75 centavos you can get a very fair meal of

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native dishes, cooked—the Lord knows how—by a black lady of very venerable years who smokes cigars with the air of a connoisseur.

The most curious place is the cemetery. It must have been built years ago, when the people still had energy to build new things.

From outside there is nothing to be seen but the high gray wall, pierced on one side to make loopholes for the Spanish garrison, and a dignified Moorish gate—that stands wide open all the time for the most sufficient of reasons. Just inside the gateway there are two rooms, one on each side. These rooms are temporary receiving vaults. They are always filled with coffins—some in use, some not. The community has but 80 one set, and uses them as litters. The body is brought as far as this, then buried without a coffin, and the coffin is used again.

Inside the gates there is one straight avenue leading to the opposite wall, with tombs on both sides. They are all old and partially ruined, but still dignified and beautiful. Here for the first time that I remember I saw in reality the inscription R. I. P.

But times have changed since the tombs were built. The town has become poorer and bigger, and the cemetery has become more and more crowded. The tombs were used again and again until they filled up, and then were emptied indiscriminately into a pile in the corner and used again, and now at every burial there is an exhuming.

It is small wonder that there has been a big demand for room. I have seen five funerals awaiting their turns at the gate. But that meant ten births, as one of the fellows optimistically remarked,—the birth rate is said to be two to one.

The sketch was a silhouette of the cathedral towers.

Utuada, Aug. 29, 1898.

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We are still waiting for something to turn up. No mail nor authentic news of any sort has come for a week. There are incessant rumors about moving, but an order to the Quartermaster to bring up from Arecibo supplies sent to meet us there, seems to indicate that for a 81 time at least we are to stay where we are. I am sorry, because I think that the air of the seacoast would be better for all of us. Still, we are comfortably situated—palatially, compared with our fate for the first month, and the rest is doing us good. The sick call smokes out less stomach aches every day, and in a week the last of the illnesses contracted in the swamp ought to have come to the surface. Our sick list is pretty long. X is among the most seriously ill. He has a fever that is typhoid in its nature—though not the real thing. He is not regarded as being in extreme danger, although he is pretty sick,—out of his head and very feverish. We have one other man—Y, who is much sicker. He has been in a critical condition for days.

I was never so much struck with the dangerous effect of that swamp as I was on the night when we came in. Our company cooks had stayed back with the rations, and didn't get to quarters till after eight. Because nobody else seemed anxious to do it, I undertook to borrow materials and utensils of the other companies and make a little supper. I cooked up a tomato broth—which was said to be excellent, by the way—making enough for about seventy, and began to serve it on that basis. I supposed that would be about right. We have 103 on the rolls. Of these 21 are behind, and five or six on detached duty. When I got to 36, the applicants began to get scarce, and at about 50 the line gave out and we all had a second chance. Of these fifty, fully ten declined a full help, some even refusing any. Since then things are vastly 82 better; but you can see how that swamp affected us.

The regiment is here alone now. Gen. Garretson and the Sixth Illinois have gone back to Ponce, presumably to go home. Tom Todd, who has been Gen. Garretson's orderly, has gone, too. Nobody knows how far they've got because up to this morning the heavy rains had kept the pass unsafe. This morning some ambulances came through and they hope to get some rations over. Its quite necessary that they should.

Our life here is very pleasant, day times. I bar the nights because I am wearing out my skin tossing round on a hard pine floor. But daytimes we have plenty to do. There are always new things to see. I got in with the school teacher down here and he gave me a grammar to study. I haven't been over to see him lately, but his book is a good thing. We are all getting so that we can catch a little of what they say, but we aren't half as quick as they are. Their ear for music is something wonderful. The kids in the street all whistle bugle calls and band tunes as well as we can. But young and old are all children. I spent an evening at the principal hotel a few days ago. There were a half dozen swells from Arecibo there, all getting ready for a dance at the Alcalde's. I happened to have a little souvenir flag in my pocket, and pinned it to one of them,—on the lapel of his white coat. He was as pleased as a child,—admired himself in the mirror for half an hour, then took a strut around the room and went at it again.

83

I hope, with reason, for some mail today. In all I had sixteen letters from the last, and know there must be lots more on the way. Sweetser expected to find seven bags at Arecibo.

Our mail was very irregular and very late. When it arrived there was a turmoil of excitement. Letters had become living things with hearts and souls. We longed for them and clung to them.

The nights were cool and damp, even when the days were hot. The babies among the poorer classes died in large numbers and usually at night. The natives in the hills had no money for priests or undertakers, and it was a not uncommon sight to see them entering town at daybreak carrying the little bodies, wrapped in palm leaves, to the cemetery for burial without ceremony.

I did not progress very far with my Spanish, but we ultimately made some progress. The Alcalde,—meaning the mayor,—had the only available Spanish-English dictionary. The old gentleman was very foresighted and discerned the advantage of learning English. He

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invited Lt. Sweetser and myself to constitute a sort of reciprocal language class in which he was to learn our language and we were to learn his, with the Spanish-English dictionary as an interpreter. We spent many a morning hour with him; he would search his side of the dictionary for the equivalent of some pleasantries about the weather, and we would reply in kind. In accordance with the general Porto Rican custom, he had available at all times a decanter of brandy and a crock of cold water, and also in accordance with local custom, we intermittently resorted to the decanter during our conversations in order to fortify ourselves against malaria or any other disease for which brandy might be an antidote. When we left Utuado, the Alcalde gave Sweetser a very beautiful cane, and to make the gift more impressive, he had attached a written inscription. To express his affection he had looked in his dictionary for the equivalent of “amado,” which probably would have been better translated as “beloved,” but one English word being as good as another to the Alcalde, he took the first equivalent and wrote on the card: “To my addicted friend.”

Utuado, Sept. 2, 1898.

I have already written one letter which will get into Sunday's bag, but I know another won't be objected to. I feel like writing tonight; mail has just come—19 letters, besides some papers—for me. It scatters through from the middle of July to the last of August.

I am living in style now. Today the new clothes came, the first we've had since we started. Of course this made things lively for me, because all issuing of such things—being a duty of the quartermaster—is done under my supervision. We have taken a house in town for headquarters; that is where my luxury begins. I live here alone. There are four rooms, large and high, though without furnishing, of course. Behind 85 the house—which is on the principal street—is a masonry terrace overlooking the river, with only room enough between for a few beautiful banana and orange trees. In front there is a piazza extending the whole length. One room is a kitchen, with a native stove. These stoves are made of masonry. They are built against the wall, like benches, and just about as high. At intervals

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of a foot or so, there are little ovens opening in front and on top, with iron gratings on top. They are all connected by a flue. The ovens themselves are perhaps 6 inches square. The smoke comes out into the room and rises to a big vent hole in the masonry wall of the house. In these ovens I build charcoal fires and cook my rice, and my eggs, and my milk toast, using my army frying pan and dipper.

In the front room there is an electric light. I have my desk under it and am writing there now at nine o'clock. The other rooms are filled partially with our stores. I have my bed in one of them. It is a pile of clothing covered with one blanket which goes under me and another that goes over me.

I couldn't get half the benefits if I hadn't become suddenly rich. Officers can't draw clothing. But the men can draw it and sell it to them. Being here I get a chance to do a lot of that and so from absolute penury I rose today to the possession of ten American dollars, with more coming tomorrow. Of course it all goes against my clothing allowance of \$46.00, but it's worth more to me now than it will be when I 86 am mustered out, especially as it may never be paid us then.

That's how I get my good dinners. I can buy eggs for 4 centavos (2 cents), milk for 10 centavos a quart, bread for 5 centavos a small loaf, bananas for 1 centavo, and lots of other good vegetable foods for a small outlay. I eat vegetables entirely now. I haven't tasted meat,—couldn't if I wanted to, which I didn't, for over two weeks. Today I had for breakfast a big dipper of milk, two boiled eggs, and a loaf of bread. For dinner I had eggs—scrambled this time,—bread, and coffee; and for supper bread, rice, and wine—the best wine I ever tasted, and the cheapest. It all cost me a little over fifty centavos—perhaps 30 cents in our money.

And I've got new clothes and a clean shave and a hair cut. From the government I got a hat, canvas trousers (beauts too), leggings, boots, and underdrawers. In the stores I

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bought a shirt of outing cloth, an undershirt, a sash such as the grandees wear, and a blue silk handkerchief to twist into a tie. On the whole, I come pretty near being a swell.

Then I've got a new job. Taylor, the Globe correspondent who has travelled with us, has been cabled to come home and leave a man in his place. He may not go, but if he does I am to be the man, at \$5 a column.

I am learning to speak Spanish, and getting acquainted with some of the local aristocracy. If we go to Arecibo, or better still San Juan, I hope to really know somebody. This is a sort of Porto Rican Podunk—I am told—and the people aren't typical of what is best in the island.

We know far less than you of our future. I am not hopeful of an early homecoming; none of the rumors appeal to me even as possibilities, and I am not worrying. If I had come away on a different errand, and got into a situation just such as mine is now, I should be quite reconciled to staying quite a little while longer. But as long as we are soldiers, we shall long to get back, as much and more on other peoples' account than our own.

But there is little cause for anyone to worry now. The fellows are well housed, well if not sumptuously fed, and very well clothed. No new sickness breaks out, and those already sick improve.

The regimental quartermaster sergeant was sick in the hospital and I was doing his work. Of course, this was a very fortunate circumstance; I not only had comparatively comfortable quarters, but I was constantly occupied. Idleness was very devastating.

Utado, Sept. 8, 1898.

I found when I came to mail my last week's letters that I had written only one after all; there isn't any—as you are probably suspecting—side-tracked on the way. Things become more routine every day here. I get up at the rising hour of a civilized man—go to a restaurant to

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breakfast (I have abandoned my kitchen 88 since the fuel supply gave out and the novelty wore off)—open my office, do a day's work, and go to bed in a hammock. Everything is pretty much the same throughout the regiment. We are learning the business.

The saddest of things is likely to happen today. X has been almost given up by the doctors. I can hardly realize it. He was watched last night with special care for fear he would not be able to pull through and though the shock didn't come the hope is no better for him this morning. I am afraid that the awful news will get to Concord long before this letter.

There are many more fellows—some from our company—almost as sick as he is. The life in that swamp was an awful thing. It developed among 1,080 men, 116 pronounced cases of fever, three or four of them already fatal. We have had no ordeal like it, and of course shall have no other like it. For a week or so after we came up to town, fellows who had staved it off for the few days were constantly coming to light, but now for a week, everybody outside the hospital is bracing up.

The life we had been living was a terrible strain. I had been going as much on my nerve as anything else. When a chance came, I slept and squared up; but when it didn't come I lived on my nerve. Just how long I could have done it I don't know; luckily better quarters and news of peace came while I was still well within my strength. I slept all day for about two 89 days and felt cheered up. Luckily there hadn't any fever settled on me. I never was much on fever. But some of the fellows,—all undergoing the same unnatural strain ever since we stepped aboard the Yale,—hadn't strength to stand it and among them the climatic ailments are making fearful havoc.

I don't consider this an unhealthful place,—for people who keep clean and eat judiciously. Arecibo—where we are going in a few days—will be far from unhealthful. And we've all of us learned prudence. Strangest of all the thing that I believe causes most of the temporary discomfort is the square meal. We have learned to live on a very limited vegetable diet.

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When we burden our stomachs with a good hearty meal—such as lots of eggs and milk, it's often too much.

For a good many reasons I shall be glad to get out of Utuado. The natives here are getting too fresh. There is going to be a great change of opinion some day about the way to handle people like these. They need a more dominant hand. When we got on the island, they were the ideal of subserviency; now they cheat us and steal from us.

We had now settled down into a manner of life which was to continue with little change for more than a month.

The barracks were warehouses or storage sheds. There were no beds or bedding. The men slept on their woolen blankets spread on the flooring.

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There was a scanty supply of water. Bathing facilities were improvised and entirely inadequate. We had been wearing the khaki uniforms issued on the Yale, the same uniforms in which we had slept by night and campaigned by day through the rain and mud and heavy tropic heat all the way from our landing at Guanica. A few men carried partial changes of underclothing, but most of us wore all we possessed,—underclothes, blue woolen shirts, canvas trousers, leggings, socks, and heavy army boots.

Rations became regular, but continued to be coarse and unvaried,—beans, rice, potatoes, salt pork, canned beef, hard-tack, coffee, although as time went on the variety and quality were slightly improved by levy on the country and better commissary service. The company cooks were untrained except by enlarging experience. The regimental commissary was energetic but also untrained, and was sorely embarrassed by difficult contacts with supply depots.

Our peculiar relations with supply depots of all kinds had an immediate effect on our general welfare. The expedition as a whole was a patch-work. The landing force at

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Guanica had been a part of a brigade commanded by a volunteer general, and a detachment of regulars entirely isolated from us in organization. The regulars had good rations; indeed, for several days our best food was stolen from them.

From Guanica to Ponce we were distinctly on our own resources. We carried along our own pork and 91 hard-tack and coffee beans, and cooked them when and where we could. At Ponce the regiment re-established relations with the supply depots, but on a regimental basis; there was no corps or brigade organization that functioned. Our staff officers requisitioned whatever they could get, competing with ten or twelve other regiments in a poorly supplied market.

Then after our arrival at Utuado the pass closed behind us, except for the passage of pack-trains, and it was a long time before pack-mules were provided. When they finally did come through, they necessarily brought the simplest and most compact provisions.

The weather was not extremely hot, but it was humid and there were many rains. The days were sultry, and the nights were damp,—sometimes actually chilly.

Our medical organization normally consisted of three surgeons, and two hospital stewards who were druggists but not doctors. Originally the only hospital supplies on hand were those brought through in an ambulance. After the need for hospitals arose, warehouses were taken over; at one time three were in use, in which over three hundred men were cared for. The sick lay on their blankets on the floor, attended by volunteer nurses from the ranks.

Almost everyone had an exhausting dysentery, particularly severe in the very early morning; at daybreak 92 the latrines were crowded. The daily routine—from first call to taps—was kept up, and to furnish exercise and diversion there was some drill, but generally the men—wholly without occupation—stayed in barracks through the sultry mid-

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days, going out only to carry their greasy cups and pans for rations, or to report to the dispensary at sick call.

One by one they yielded to the fever, always resisting, always determined to fight it out until they became too weak to struggle any longer. Then they took their places in the long ranks on the hospital floors, feeble, and yellow, and so emaciated that the sutures were plainly visible.

In a later letter I said that the greatest harm would be life-long enfeeblement. This proved in many, many cases to be pitifully true.

Utuado, September 10, 1898.

A big mail came yesterday, bringing letters from you all, yours from Kingston, Louise's from Concord, and papa's from aboard the Seneca. Papa's letter was postmarked Ponce, which of course puzzled me, and his opening sentence was "here I am aboard the Seneca," which made me jump. I knew that the Seneca lay in Ponce harbor, and it flashed into my mind that he had come down on some such errand as Sherman Hoar's. Of course the rest of the note explained things; but my heart beat fast for awhile.

I haven't seen the trunk yet, or formed the least idea of what is in it. Not being in the 93 company barracks but seldom, I haven't seen Walter Sohier to give him his note. Maj. Darling left Ponce yesterday—early in the day—with a wagon train headed for Utuado. It is very probable that the trunk is on his train. I have no means of finding out because for two days the Ponce wire has been down between here and Adjuntas. His train should get here tonight; if it is not aboard, I shall give directions to Bill Whiting—one of our sergeants who is going to start home tomorrow on a furlough—to hunt it up and have it put where I can get it. Transportation from Ponce here is very difficult; wagon trains seldom get through without the loss of at least one team. But if we go to Arecibo in a few days, as I expect we shall, the trunk may be sent around with other things, by sea.

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By some sort of a miracle, — survived the night. He is unconscious and of course takes no nourishment. He was saved last night by the injection of a stimulant. Phil Davis was around to see me yesterday afternoon. Phil is a wonder; he has spent all his time nursing, ever since — was taken seriously sick. He shows the strain terribly.

Of course we are still hoping against hope, but the doctors give us no encouragement. He has never been well since he was in that awful hospital on the Yale. Few fellows would have had the grit to stick to it as he did. Be he husbanded every ounce of strength until he finally had to give in, over there in the swamp.

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I have hardly realized, until now, what a severe strain we have been through. But I believe that we have passed the climax. New cases of sickness are fewer every day, although there are many every day who give up to what they have been struggling against, and go to the hospital. Our company is suffering among the most unlucky. W, X, Y, Z, and one or two others are sick in the hospitals, — and — who are laid up in quarters.

For awhile it was an alarming state of things. We were on the Yale three weeks, and we were undoubtedly weakened by the experience there. Then came a week of hard physical work, exposure, and small and irregular rations. After that we camped at Ponce, and got partly rested, but our food was not the kind to *restore* strength. From Ponce to Utuado was another terrific strain, and then came ten days of life in that fever-breeding swamp. But now for two weeks we have had dry, clean, and comparatively comfortable quarters in doors; the men have had an excellent chance to rest, and would have regained their strength if there were the elements of strength in a government ration. Unfortunately, there are not, and the only alternative is the food that the markets sell, eggs, milk, potatoes, and wheat bread; but money is very scarce.

Is our company fund all gone? We need it badly here; hardly a man has any money at all, and there are a great many men whom the doctors have advised to live on such things as

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milk and eggs. Almost all of us need some such 95 stimulating food. I hear that Co. H has just drawn \$100 of their money, and it seems as if we could get at ours by some similar means if there is any left. It will never be needed more than it is now.

My voice is normal again. I have just about as much cough as I usually have in the hayfever season, and I attribute it to that. Otherwise I am well and strong; eggs, milk, sweet potatoes, and rice have done all that salt pork and army coffee undid, which in my case wasn't much anyway. A piece of strawberry short cake, or even an apple pie with ice cream on it, would go pretty good; but I enjoy what I get quite well.

We were in desperate need of money. The rations were not merely coarse; their deadly monotony made them offensive, particularly to men who were in a weakened condition. Better food could have been purchased but there seemed to be no money available.

Utuaado, Sept. 13, 1898.

Of course you know of Ralph's death long before this. Our cable left here Sunday, and an answer—directing his removal to America, came Monday after the funeral. In spite of the solemn subject matter of the messages, I think many of the homesick boys were appreciably cheered by such evidence of easy communication. Mr. Hosmer's cable could not of course affect us. Whatever is done—and of course everything will be done—must come 96 from America. The means and the skill are not available here.

Ralph died Sunday, about half past three. Phil, who was with him to the last, came right to me, to see that we did everything that should be done. I went to the Captain to make sure that a cable was sent to Mr. Hosmer. We were planning it when Dr. Washburn came to get the address of Ralph's nearest relative. He is obliged to report that with the death, to Ponce; the supposition being, of course, that the Ponce authorities would cable home. We urged the necessity of a more personal message, and I wrote it and took it to the office to make sure.

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Monday morning we planned the funeral and picked out a place for a grave. It was a melancholy errand. You can never know how melancholy. The few boys who have died before, have all been buried outside the town cemetery, between the masonry wall and a brook that runs close by. This place, unsuited at best, is as full as it should be. But adjoining the real consecrated cemetery there is an enclosed space which I assume is not consecrated. It is high and dry, and a very decent burial place. It had been prepared for a fortification by the regulars, but Col. Rice gave us permission to take away the platforms, and clear the ground.

The funeral was at three Monday. Company I went armed as escort. The whole regiment, unarmed, attended in ranks. All the officers went down. Father Sherman, the General's son, who is our chaplain now, officiated. Six 97 of our boys, all sons of civil war veterans—though not necessarily in the organization, were bearers. There were many flowers picked in the plaza.

The service was very dignified and impressive. Chaplain Sherman read the army service, substantially the Church service; then three volleys were fired, and taps blown.

The doctor made a post mortem examination and found that it was not typhoid. He called it endocarditis, which is an inflammation or incrustation on the inside of the heart. Dr. Washburn said that the organs were very poorly developed—especially the lungs,—I don't know that the treatment could have been varied much even if the disease had been diagnosed correctly, unless the feeding with small quantities of brandy affected the action of the heart improperly. He had the very best of care—Phil was a magnificent nurse, and the hospital is in excellent shape.

His death was absolutely quiet, a gradual fading out of the strength that he had husbanded so long. For a week he had been delirious and for three days utterly unconscious. His delirium did not seem of the heart-racking kind, he talked about drilling and about the

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bank, and about Concord, but not in a painful way. I wish his mother could get comfort from this, as we have.

He was buried in his blue suit, the one he wore into the army. It seems almost as if Fate had spurred him to carry it over so many hard miles. With him we put a bottle containing 98 an identification, and a little biographical note. It is the custom in the army. I prepared the note, and enclose a copy. There may be slight errors, but the substance is right.

You will have been surprised to receive a letter from me postmarked New York, as I was to get one postmarked Ponce. Bill Whiting should have explained how it got to America. I should like to be in Whiting's place for some reasons, and still there are many reasons why I should rather be here. He may have to turn right around and come back, and besides, I should hate to desert the company anyway.

We still need the money—luckily not myself—personally—but the company as a whole.

Business continues brisk at the Q. M.'s. Within the last ten days we issued 1,000 new trousers, shoes, hats, leggings, stockings, and drawers, and today 1,000 coats, a few more leggings, trousers, hats, and ponchos. We are a very dressy looking regiment now. I am sorry to displace the service-worn outfits, but it is a wise move in view of its impression on the people. Their idea of a soldier must be considered during our service here.

My own particular work is very much on the increase. I keep a set of books showing all receipts and issues of clothing, an account of money receipts and expenditures (balancing today at about 1,000 dollars) and a record of interments, with innumerable official telegrams, and supervise the supplying the company cooks with fire wood. This record business is really 99 Hackett's; but he is sick. I am going to have a clerk tomorrow.

Plenty to do keeps a fellow away from the rumor bees, and keeps him well. It is distressing to see how the fellows dwell on the idea of getting home, unfortunate to talk and think so constantly of it as most of the fellows do. This is a very attractive town, and a valuable

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experience, and a life full of information. I want to get back as much as any one—I rather guess—but it won't do any good to put on blinders.

The trunk has been telegraphed for and is on the way. I hope there are films in it; I want to take lots more pictures.

Maj. Darling, who has just come up from Ponce, said today that he saw a nurse on the Seneca who brought me papa's good wishes. He tried to get her to deliver in person, but she had to reluctantly decline. I don't know how I should treat an American woman, not having spoken to one for two months. Mrs. Rice is here, to be sure, but I haven't met her. She spends most of her time helping in the hospital.

If the blue book for 1898 is out—I suppose the paper covered one must be anyway, I should like a copy mailed me. Papa will know about it. There are lots of times when I can be looking it over.

Si tu vale, bene est. Valeo.

Ralph Hosmer was the playmate of my childhood. He was clean, honorable, resolute. Always frail, he was nevertheless determined to carry on. Time after time he was offered a chance to go back but 100 would not go. No man in the regiment better knew the grim reality of military service. His ancestor had fought in the Revolution. His father died of an illness contracted in a Confederate prison. Ralph Hosmer went into the service—and stayed and died there—in obedience to his conscience.

On a scrap of soiled paper, I later found this:

Corporal Ralph Prescott Hosmer.

Through the palm trees, swung slow by the whispering wind, Glows the red of the sinking sun;
To the echoing hills the bugle tells That a soldier's work is done.

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He has gone to sleep, and the trumpet's note Shall rouse him no more from rest; In that last, long camp he has pitched his tent With the legions of the blest.

But when Duty shall sound its assembly call, Sharp, clear, above Life's din, Our hearts will still hark to his old command, His cheery, prompt "Fall in."

Utuaado, Sept. 16, 1898.

My mail had better be directed to Geo. G. King, Headquarters 6th Man. hereafter. The regiment is probably to be broken up into detachments, and I shall be with the Quartermaster at headquarters. I shall probably be acting 101 regimental quartermaster sergeant during the rest of our service. Capt. Cook—without consulting me—appointed me a corporal yesterday. I didn't want it—in fact I have declined it several times, and I told him this morning that I would not take it because I could not leave Sweetser to do the regular duty of a corporal. He said that he didn't expect me to return to duty with the company. About the same time I heard that Hackett, the actual regimental Q. M. Sgt. is going back on the Bay State because of malaria. It occurred to me that by being a corporal I could succeed Hackett, and I took the warrant. Sweetser is apparently glad to recommend such a detail, and I have very little doubt that I shall practically be a member of the non-com staff in a few days. I get a little more money, and some prestige, and a good time generally out of it.

X works for me now. I needed a clerk, and picked him out. He is a good worker, and was getting into that frame of mind when too much leisure is harmful. He seems to like the work. I hope he does, because I want to keep him.

Co. I will probably go to some small inland town. We are likely to go to Arecibo. I hope we are going there; I want to get back to the ocean again, and Arecibo is a delightful town.

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The sick go there tomorrow, to meet the Bay State. Some of Co. I's men will be in the lot. About a hundred are going altogether. This will cut our strength down below 1,000; we left with about 1,328.

102

Various companies were sent to nearby towns for police duty. After the Spanish withdrew, there was a considerable amount of lawlessness and friction between the poorer classes and the wealthy Spanish. It was a not infrequent sight to see several barns in flames at night. The lawlessness was so extensive that many people of means left the interior and resorted to the larger towns for safety. One American civilian went to Arecibo for security and notwithstanding the presence of 1,000 American soldiers, took cover in the British consulate.

Utuaado, Sept. 20, 1898.

The Bay State's passengers have left Utuaado; by this time they are probably aboard the vessel, luxuriating in clean new suits, good grub, and clean bunks. They went from here this morning at five, a hundred of them, some in mule-wagons fitted with seats, some in mule-wagons arranged with cots and hammocks, and some in ambulances. The prospect of really going home was a great stimulant; they were an energetic looking lot of sick men. I saw the procession as I stood in my underclothes behind the slat door of my house. Luxury revives my old habits; all my best resolutions to get up and see the boys off went the way of most resolutions of mine affecting hours earlier than seven A. M., when I half woke at the sound of ambulance wheels and saw how dark and misty it was.

I am still luxuriating *como les Espanols*. I have taken lately to breakfasting on bread and 103 coffee, generally with a glass of milk. Today I have lived an ideal life. I had little to do till about ten. Then when the heat of the day made all outdoors uncomfortable, I retired to my back room on the river where I have a hammock hung, and dozed with a few interruptions till noon. X asked me out to lunch,—he doesn't court my society, but

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some days for want of more refined association he tolerates me. We went to the Casa de Huespedan, which has the questionable honor of being the best restaurant in town. They gave us napkins, which staggered me a little at first, but my table manners had been braced by a breakfast there with Lieut. A a day or two ago. The dinner was a stunner—see what you think of it. Bread,—not in slices but in half loaves—a loaf is baked in a flat pan and covered during cooking with a banana leaf; a half loaf is as big as a big roll,—steak, fried; and a slice of sweet potato. Second course—kidneys cut up into little pieces and cooked in laurel leaves; then beans and rice; then cheese, guava jelly and bananas; and then black coffee and cigars. Sweet wine is always served with substantial meals. Such a repast costs half a peso; for a stocking-up, at intervals, it is worth it. My treasury couldn't stand such a thing though.

After dinner I got into my hammock again for an hour; then I had my horse and went down to the cemetery to direct the location of a grave. After that, just to show Andrews that I was still vigorous, I shouldered a 100 104 pound bag of oats and carried it a quarter of a mile to the stables. There was still an hour before supper to read old magazines. I took out Y to supper. He has a bit of indigestion and needed a little special diet. I had *sopa, leche, con pan, un plata media frejoles media arroz—costo diez y siete centavos*, which translated into the lingo means soup, milk, bread, a plate of beans and rice, all for 17 cents Spanish. Since supper we have had an hour on the plaza; now we are inside, where it is less damp.

Horse back riding is getting to be my greatest pleasure. The Q. M. has charge of all the horses. There are five government plugs here now, for the use of the mounted officers who haven't private mounts. All I have to do is to go and have one of them saddled. I do it whenever I have an errand thro' town, or whenever I can contrive an errand. Unfortunately, I don't always get the same horse. For some days I had a trotter; he wouldn't lope—I could stop his trotting only by running him. Then I had a good one that cantered; he and I have cleared away many a litter of pigs and broods of chickens, not to mention dogs and boys, from the main thoroughfare of Utuado. Today I had a buckner. He had nostalgia—wouldn't miss a chance to get back to the stable. We had a battle at every street corner. Twice he

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rose upright on his hind legs. I was scared blue, but it was impractical as a remedy, and I jabbed away with my heels till he surrendered.

105

Riding is charming here because of its variety. One day I had to locate the camp of a train of pack mules. They proved to be miles out on a narrow trail that follows the river—fifty feet above the water and two hundred below the top of the cliffs. The horse didn't relish a mule's job—I didn't either, and rode with my feet free so that we would roll by ourselves if it proved that there was roiling to be done. But we got through safe. I dined with the packers that day. They are a wild lot—cow punchers, mostly, ride mules with absolute fearlessness and know a beast of burden from A to Z. But they set a good dinner and I couldn't eat enough to suit them, even though I came wonderfully near suiting myself.

Another day I was in the mule corral when the mules were driven in from pasture. They gathered round my horse—you know that the lead animal in a pack train is always a horse—they will follow him as if they were tethered. I was afraid I should have the whole train on my hands if I rode away. So I waited till all but two were fast. The packer said they wouldn't follow and I rode off. Behind me those two mules came jogging along. I tried more speed—and gained at first. A native on the road tried to stop them, but they charged him out of the way and came on like race horses. My plug happened to have speed and I tried it out for a mile or so, kicking a dog out of the road incidentally. But it was no use; the mules clung like shadows, and I had to take them back.

106

I have been down today to select a burial place for one of Co. L's men who died this morning. It is a regular duty of the department.

Conditions here improve little, if any. It is not an exaggeration to say that nine-tenths of all conversation among the men is on one of two subjects—the prospect of going home, and the sick. With hours to talk, such conversation is terribly demoralizing. Absurd rumors of yellow fever and small pox at Ponce come up now and then, and some of the men seem

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to hunger for something morbid. I don't like to seem discouraging, but I must admit that the situation here now is far from cheerful. Dr. Dow has gone home—sick. No more doctors are available; Washburn and Gross have the whole brunt of it.

There is a little work that the regiment can do. The natives are becoming very unruly—they have confused justice with retaliation, and the Spanish coffee plantations are in constant danger of fire and plunder. There is already an organized band called the Black Hand, of great strength throughout this whole section, that burns, plunders, and murders almost nightly. We mount details on native ponies, and accomplish something in the way of restraint, but as a regiment of infantry we are powerless. A troop of the 1st Kentucky volunteer mounted infantry is camping here now, and might stop the thing at its inception. But their stay is to be very temporary.

107

Arecibo is still closed to us for occupation because of the presence of Spanish troops. Their transports were inadequate to the fulfilling of their agreement to vacate by Sept. 12th. Maybe intentional delays. It won't do them any good, now. We could clear the island in a week if hostilities should ever break out again.

It would save lives if they did. The men need occupation more than medicine. But we may move at any time now. Arecibo is to be the next town vacated, and we will probably move headquarters there. I long for salt air and salt breezes. We swelter here in the heat of the day.

My host at luncheon was one of the so-called "Harvard crowd" that joined the regiment as second call men. They were generally regarded as a little too elegant. One of them in particular became rather a nuisance because he insisted on hanging around headquarters for special details. There was a constant need of burros for use as pack animals and we had completely depleted the valley. One day the Colonel abruptly directed that thirty burros were to be gathered together for use the next morning, and knowing very well

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that there weren't thirty burros within miles of us, we turned the job over to the ambitious Bachelor of Arts. He rode all night until he was sore, and finally carne in with three animals. The Colonel said he had done an energetic and capable piece of work and made him a corporal.

108

The rumors of plans for our recall were constant and aggravating. Someone finally set up a "rumor board" in the company barracks and all the rumors were posted as rapidly as they came in. There was very soon a large and hopelessly inconsistent collection.

Utado, Porto Rico, Sept. 23, 1898.

Our boxes and trunks all came today by way of Arecibo. Everything was well selected and sure to be useful. The underclothes are fine—decidedly in contrast to both the native article and the army issue.

Today is a red letter day. Nearly every company has a box, and nearly every man is happier by some new possession. Dozens of boxes of Red Cross supplies are stored in my back room. Among them are cans of chicken and beef extract. I have just had a supper of boullion and chicken sandwiches.

I don't know that I told you that orders had come from the office of the War Department directing a daily report by cable showing the strength of the regiment. I feel certain that this will operate in our favor, and more certain that it indicates that pressure is being exerted in our behalf. It seems humiliating to see a regiment of volunteers so intent on getting out of their country's service, but there is much to justify it. There is no use equivocating. I haven't, although you apparently think that I have. This morning's telegram, showing 109 yesterday's strength, reports 1014 enlisted men on the island, and of these 334 men sick either in hospital or in quarters. In other words, 32 per cent of the regiment are sick. Our total strength is in round numbers 1300. Of the 300 that are not here, probably 100 have been transferred, or have been discharged or are away on furlough. At least 200

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have gone away on sick leave; of these possibly 50 have recovered and reported. The proportion of sick apparently increases; but I think that the apparent increase is really a deception. There are many men in every company who have put off reporting at sick call from day to day. The record is swelled—I know for a fact in many cases—not by men who are newly sick, but by men who have at last given in. Very generally these obstinate fellows prove to be the candidates for the hospitals. There are scores of men who won't go near the surgeons unless something serious changes their minds. The day after a death the sick list swells amazingly—simply because men who should have reported sick days ago, have at last been scared into it. This week there is no difficulty in getting out the right men; they all know that their salvation may depend on a sensationally big sick list and they line up by dozens. One company sent down 48 yesterday, and 43 of them were sent to hospital or to quarters.

This sick call is a part of the day's routine that I may never have explained. It is a cheerless but an important event of an army day. Each company has what is technically known as 110 a sick book. It is an ominously big book, with pages ruled transversely into uniform lines, and vertically into columns for the men's names, the date of their first reporting sick, their ailment, and their disposition by the surgeons. Each morning, at sick call, which sounds soon after breakfast, a sergeant in each company enters in his book the names of all the men who want to see the surgeons, including the men who are in the hospitals or in quarters for a period longer than one day. Then the captain signs the page, as a guarantee that the men are serious in their inclination to have medical advice, and the sergeant book in hand leads his collection of lame, halt, and blind, a quarter of a mile or a half a mile as the case may be from the barrack to the dispensary. Inside, the chief surgeon is sitting on a box, hurrying through the line; outside, from the door of the hospital to the corner of the plaza, there are other sick men waiting their turn. Then comes a wait—sometimes of two or three hours. When finally the turn comes—often the lines have worked up, like a file of ticket buyers in the foyer of the Boston theatre—the sergeant gives the surgeon the sick book and the first man of a company steps up. The surgeon says, “What is it?” and has

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the poor fellow by the wrist or by the cheeks before he is half through his answer. Then it's generally "two bismuth," or "camphor and opium," and an unceremonious hustling along to a conveniently handy hospital steward who with equal celerity fills the prescription and stands ready for another. With each man the operation is repeated; 111 sometimes he is told that he is all right; sometimes he's told to come back in the afternoon to have his temperature taken; sometimes he is ordered to a hospital forthwith; and sometimes he is told to stay quiet in quarters for a week or so. But the line is never delayed by ceremony; no one ever gets a second's attention that isn't required by the circumstances. When the company's list is completed the sergeant gets his book back, with the proper entry by the surgeon opposite each man's name—"Hos"—"Qu"—"light duty"—"Dis"—"Not ex"—as the case may be. Then the feeble procession reforms and creeps back home.

The result of this, expedition has a very considerable effect on the company's morning report. Each man who is ordered to hospital, or to quarters, or on light duty, is not required to drill or do guard duty during the period indicated. The company's strength is cut down just so much, as far as the record goes. For instance, a company may have 75 privates on its rolls. Of these ten may be on duty that exempts them from drill or guard duty—men with jobs like mine, or men on detail as nurses. This is called daily duty. Fifteen more may be "sick" technically—excused by the process I have just described. There will then be 50 men "present for duty." The totals of the twelve companies will be the basis of reckoning for all such things as guard details. Suppose the regimental total is 500, and a guard of 20 is needed, the company that is 50 strong, 10% of the regiment, will be computed by the adjutant to be liable to a detail 112 of 2 men,—10% of the regimental guard. Our company total present for duty has been as low as 31; I have known of companies reaching as low as 21. We have about 19 men on daily duty—out of 88 present, sick, on detail, and present for duty. This is a fair illustration of how a company becomes split up in service.

This was to be a note—just to acknowledge the boxes Nothing stops me even now but a long-standing whist appointment in the Adjutant's office.

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It seems needless to say that I am still well. Even my hay-fever has deserted me—if indeed it was hay fever, in a land where the horses die for the want of hay.

I deleted from this letter a very specific discussion of our recall. The question was warmly debated, in camp and at home. We had heard that there were persons in Massachusetts who opposed an appeal for our withdrawal. Their opinion was said to be that a soldier ought not to shirk his duty. We were unanimously disgusted.

Utuaado, Sept. 28, 1898.

Company I, forty-five men strong, leaving behind only the men in the hospitals, left today to garrison Camuy, a little town five miles out of Arecibo toward San Juan. Of course I couldn't have gone even if I had wanted to. I am acting regimental quarter-master sergeant now, and busy every minute. I succeeded in having — allowed to stay for a while 113 at least—to do clerical work with me. He much rather be here. We get our rations with Company H, the Stoneham company. I have many friends there, particularly among the officers, and their cooks are notoriously the best in the regiment. I fixed it with the adjutant so that we might get our meals there. We take over our dishes, get whatever there is, and bring it back here to the back room where we can add little luxuries of our own. Day before yesterday we had a rice ration, and added warmed up chicken. Yesterday we had rice again, and flavored it up with tomato soup extract. Tonight we had flap-jacks as big as soup plates.

I wrote my first Globe letter today. Taylor, the regular reporter, has been a long time going, but he got away finally, and left me to fill his place. I am going to write about twice a week, until I am stopped.

I am practically quartermaster sergeant. Hackett is at home, and will never come back.

Lt. Sweetser, who has been at Arecibo, a little sick, came back today. I was mightily glad to see him. More men and teams have gone down today to get a lot of commissary and

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hospital supplies. I came very near to going down Sunday. The Colonel wanted me to find out how Sweetser was; my horse was saddled, and I was just riding off when Barry told me that word had come. I took a ride to a place spelled Jobo and called Hobo, seven miles out. I never saw a more beautiful stretch of country.

Things in the company didn't improve much lately. Poor Carl Hart died Monday, and was 114 buried Tuesday. His death was of course a depressing influence.

Our sick are getting more attention lately. An order has just come to move all convalescents to Arecibo, to be shipped from there home. This is the first intimation that we have had that the surgeon general's department is concerning itself about us.

No paymaster yet, and no mail for a fortnight. Twenty-six bags are coming tomorrow though. I rather have that of the two.

I am all over anything like hay-fever. But I had it plainly enough. My good health is a wonderful thing; I am one of a score of well men.

The Bay State, the first hospital ship to relieve us, was not a Government vessel, but had been provided by citizens of Massachusetts.

Utuaado, Sept. 29, 1898.

Today the town is filled with restless men nervously waiting to start for Arecibo and the Bay State. The vessel is already at Ponce, and hourly expected to start round to Arecibo. A census of the sick has been taken, and some ninety men have been made happy by promise of furloughs. It will be a great day for them—greater than many of them realize, because it will save them the curse of a chronic disease. It is a fortunate thing that the regiment does not know how much of the sickness it has gone through will leave a permanent impression. But the doctors admit in confidence that many of the men 115 will never entirely recover their strength.

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X is going. I hope to be able to send in his care a piece of black cedar—really mahogany wood—that I have selected to make papa a cane.

Three at least of our boys are going, Y, who is convalescent after a long attack of malarial fever, Z, who has very recently become convalescent from an attack of real nostalgia, and W.

It is an unfortunate thing for the rest of us that the Bay State's cargo will present a pretty spritely appearance for a regiment's sick. The truth is that our sickest couldn't go, and some of our moderately sick wouldn't.

Every day makes me hope more strongly that we will be among the next fortunate regiments. If I were not busy at the quartermaster's, in clean quarters, comfortable as far as money goes, and in good health, I should be clamoring for a selfish purpose. But I am among those least in need of release. The poor fellows who are spending their days in idleness, on the barrack floors, without reading matter or any means of occupation, enervated by the climate, and restricted in their rations, are naturally being affected by such a life, physically and mentally. Young fellows of intelligence and ambitions can't be expected to retain all their best qualities through months of such inactivity and want of stimulus.

The men's health is still far from out of the question. Homesickness and mental inactivity are pretty closely connected with physical condition. Mild fevers still prevail. Climatic dangers 116 have still to be guarded against. Worst of all, there is something peculiar about this air that does not admit of the recovery of strength. A man may be sick, and get well; but what muscle he loses doesn't come back.

However, I am not spending much time worrying about a muster-out. I haven't time. Just now Sweetser is in Arecibo and I am running the office assisted pleasantly by numerous gentlemen who have resurrected obsolete orders detailing them for work here—one of

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them is a sergeant, my superior in rank. Luckily he is slow of perception, and hasn't seen yet that I have sorted most of the unpleasant jobs to his share. He'll get sick of it pretty soon and leave me unmolested.

The last mail, which I think I spoke of, brought a dollar from papa which I think I forgot to thank him for. It swells to \$1.75 down here—and feeds me three or four days at the least. It's a good investment.

Has any State pay come? I don't want it, but I'd like to know, just for curiosity. I am owed \$28. My pay now is about \$18 a month. I am getting rich fast.

If it hasn't been done already, Geo. Warren better scrape, paint, and varnish my canoe this fall. The paint can't have too long to dry. I like grass green best.

Our personal trunk I hope to find among the officers' baggage, sent round from Ponce to Arecibo. Such things are easily mislaid by quartermasters who have no personal responsibility. The bay State boxes will probably come up at the 117 same time. I met a number of Bay State nurses the other night. They didn't report any alarming changes in Boston.

Co. C has gone to Lares for garrison. Other companies are in readiness to move. I expect developments very soon now. This town has lost its novelty—still it's a good place—we may not find a better.

Utuaado, Sept. 30, 1898.

Utuaado has been transformed by the magician-like appearance of Mr. Macdonald. It seems like a glimpse of Concord but in a weird setting. He came yesterday. I was sitting at dinner with Charlie Gage in our back room. One of the hostlers leaned over the piazza rail and hollered: "Man to see you, George." I wasn't anxious to be disturbed and asked who it was. He said "A Concord man." I ran out, still incredulous, and saw Mr. Macdonald sitting

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astride a government mule, muddy and travel-worn. He came in and gave an account of himself; then I took him to the hotel and looked after him. In the afternoon I introduced him to Dr. Washburn and we all went the rounds of the hospitals. I introduced Mr. Macdonald to every sick Concord boy, twenty-four in all, to all the Concord boys on duty as nurses and to all the rest of our company who are still in quarters here too weak to pull through with the company. In the evening we had a reception in my back room and everybody told the same story at the same time as fast as he could talk, until poor 118 Mr. Macdonald got tired and went off to bed. This morning I went to breakfast with him and showed him the cemetery. Today he has been going the rounds again and doing a world of good. Mr. Hart has cabled that a casket is on the way for his son and Mr. Macdonald has decided to stay till the Bay State goes back and do the whole work.

Mr. Macdonald will tell you how we all are. He knows how I am. I tell you it is good to see a Concord face. He is doing a grand work here. I never saw a man more eagerly received, even by the men who don't know him.

I'm writing in a great hurry just to get word home that I am all right and to mention Mr. Macdonald's visit. The mail goes tomorrow at five and I must write up a Globe article after this.

I am a full-fledged quartermaster sergeant now, and shall be transferred in a few days from Co. I to the non-com. staff. I get \$27.60 per month, a tripple bar on my chevrons, a hard job, and perennial cussing. But I am glad to have it. The colonel knew little enough of me to think that I was the right man.

Well, read the Globe for the rest.

Mr. Macdonald was the pastor of the Unitarian Church in Concord. He was intensely shocked by the conditions as he saw them. We tried to soften his impression by assuring

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him that we were not as 119 uncomfortably situated as we appeared, but he formed and retained a very depressing impression.

October 4, 1898.

Just time to scribble a note to send by the Relief which will leave Arecibo in a day or two. I have been busy till the last minute getting my news ready for the Globe. I am still out of the doctor's clutches. Things are looking brighter every day. I expect a marked decrease in sickness very soon. Mr. Macdonald is doing a world of good. He has gone to Camuy today to see the rest of the company.

October 5, 1898.

Mr. Macdonald tells me that we can't write too often. I agree with him from both points of view. My greatest enjoyment is an evening that I can devote to letters without an interruption. I have been busy for three or four days doing all that I can for him, but he is gone to Camuy now, to stay until the Bay State gets here. His visit has done a great deal of good.

He showed immense grit even to get here. He pulled through a good deal that would have absolutely blocked a less determined or less robust man. He isn't the picture of health; I hope his plucky trip won't be too much for him.

People must be on the guard against taking his report too literally. Of course things look worse to an inexperienced man. I am still persistently optimistic. I know that I detect a better state of things every day.

120

We are being paid today. I shall send 25 or 30 dollars by Mr. MacDonald. I get more from now on, and I see no reason why I can't get a little ahead as long as I hold my job.

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Indications of a long stay seem rather to increase. I am very reconciled. We shall be in Arecibo in a few days.

Our numbers are getting pretty small. Eighty-five more convalescents went on the Relief today, among them five or six Concord boys. But the hospitals are doing fine work. We have five doctors and eight trained nurses—besides all the men who have had so many months of army training.

I can't begin to acknowledge all the good literature I got in the last mail. It is a center of attraction for all the officers in the regiment. But don't trouble to send papers; I can't keep up with them. Send whatever clippings are particularly interesting; there's too much dead reckoning in a two week's old paper.

P.S. News came today Oct. 6) that the regiment is to be relieved sometime this month. This may not mean a muster out but it's a step toward home.

We received two months' pay—\$15.60 a month for each private soldier. Taps were ordered late, and some of the men spent the evening (and a little money) with libidinous native women on the hill. "Single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints." But so far as I know none of the Concord 121 men were dissolute in conduct at any time during their service.

Utuaado, October 10, 1898.

This will be about my last chance to get a letter into this mail. Tomorrow night I shall probably be busy with a Globe letter. There is an overabundance of material.

It is about certain that we—headquarters—will move to Arecibo Wednesday. We were ordered there today, but the rivers are so high that our transportation is being battered all to pieces in the fords. You can imagine the effect on an army outfit when it tries to go

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through a river so deep that the wagon floats and the mules have to swim. The Arecibo road is fast becoming strewn with broken wagons and dead mules.

The regiment which is to relieve us left Oct. 6, and should reach San Juan tomorrow. It cannot be less than a fortnight before we embark. Everyone of the eight stations now occupied by us must be in the hands of our successors before we can leave them. The roads are all difficult, and the railway over which we must move to San Juan, where we are to embark, is badly washed out both sides of Arecibo. We are still in the dark as to our destination. I wired to Ponce today for our equipment of heavy underclothes; we will freeze wherever we go.

Another one of our men, Adams of Waltham, died today of typhoid pneumonia. I knew him very little; he kept very much with his Waltham friends. When — and — were taken 122 sick, he and Phil went to nurse them. When on this duty he developed a fever.

I have to arrange the funeral as I do for all funerals. Besides that Lt. Decker asked me to take the company to the funeral in some sort of a military formation and march to the grave. This will take all tomorrow afternoon.

X is fast improving, hardly fast enough though to go to the Bay State. We shall send four or five. Y and Z almost certainly.

I have had a busy week settling up for a departure. I have marked all the graves, eleven in all. After marking them with substantial mahogany boards, I took photographs and made a plan. This is the most grewsome of my varied charges—the cemetery. I am one of only two men in the outfit who can locate all eleven graves. I have accurate plans and notes and the Colonel says I may have to come back sometime in the event of a removal.

Arecibo is getting pretty hot. There was a riot there yesterday—people were shot and wounded. The trouble is all between Spanish and Porto Ricans. The natives are getting very unruly. I have samples of it every day. We owe many bills, which will all be paid

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as soon as the Department at Ponce can get around to sending us the money. But the natives infest this office at all hours, clamoring for it. I have orders to explain to them first, send them away second, and kick them out last. It generally is the last. One burly black had to be thrown half way across the road before he developed a respect for the majesty of the American government.

123

Chandler, my "shipper," says he doesn't know of any business I haven't done since I came into the army. Neither do I.

I guess I'm getting back all the weight I lost. My muscle is good, and my trousers have a comfortably close feeling over the stomach that I never thought I should feel again short of an American pie. I was a good deal grieved to find this morning that a rat had gnawed three holes in the sleeves of my new canvas coat. They rollick in my bedroom at all hours, and run over us when we're asleep. Nobody minds them much.

I have a game of whist on hand now—it is good to get a little civilized, homelike diversion, after a day of wrangling in broken Spanish.

One of the duties of the regimental quartermaster's department was to arrange the funerals. It was necessary to have coffins hastily prepared and to see to the digging of the graves. The coffins were built over night. There was no suitable supply on hand. The funerals usually occurred in the early morning. A detail of men to make a grave would be provided by the Adjutant's office and it was my distressing duty to direct the work.

My last letters were from Utuado. We learned that we were homeward bound, and likely to move as rapidly as the mail.

The night before we left Utuado was a very busy one. There were many sick in quarters, well enough 124 to be moved, but not well enough to march. It was the business of the

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quartermaster to provide transportation; we improvised seats in the Studebaker wagons and thus made room for a considerable number of convalescents.

The wagons left early in the morning. Most of the regiment was on duty in other towns, but the companies which still remained in Utuado left with the wagon train. Everyone was very happy.

I had kept one wagon to carry the regimental records and miscellaneous supplies. We also had a haversack containing about \$500 in American currency which was the regimental emergency fund. There were three of us beside the driver to go on the wagon; and just as we were leaving, Jim Hall, a discharged wagon-master, asked me for a ride and was accommodated.

The road to Arecibo lay up a mountain, then down a long decline, then through the valley of the Arecibo River. We climbed the mountain without misadventure but when we reached the crest a tropical rain was threatening, and Hall, whom I had given the reins in preference to the native driver, determined to make every effort to reach the fords in the valley before the river filled. Immediately after a tropical rain the rivers rose three or four feet.

Hall turned the mules loose,—we had four in harness and one led mule,—and they thundered down the slope with no restraining hand on the reins. 125 There are no springs under a Studebaker wagon body, but sometimes a very lively spring under the seat. Those of us who were on the seat rose and fell with every rut in the road, but those of us who were in the body of the wagon were rattled around until our shins were sore. The rain had already overtaken us, and when we reached the first ford in the valley the river was very much swollen,—indeed, it had risen earlier in the day; down stream two or three wagons were already floundering in the current. Hall nevertheless decided to attempt the crossing. We reached mid-stream; then the mules lost their footing and a tangled mass of mules and

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harness struggled in the water. We jumped in up to our waists, untangled the mules, and finally reached the farther bank.

The second ford appeared to be absolutely forbidding. We could not risk the official records of the regiment. There was a *hacienda* nearby and I decided to commandeer accommodations for the night. It was the home of the Ruiz family, wealthy farmers and stock raisers, who owned a large area in the Arecibo valley. The men of the family were not at home, but we were graciously received by the *senora*, who directed her servants to provide us quarters.

We were thoroughly soaked by the rain and by our efforts in the river, but among the miscellaneous supplies there was a box of khaki uniforms and although we were not able to fit ourselves very suitably, 126 we could at least make ourselves presentable. It was early evening and in due course we were invited into the large living room.

There we found the *senora*, and three *senoritas* apparently ranging in age from sixteen to twenty. It fell to my lot to entertain the youngest one and with a view to making conversation which would be within the range of my very limited Spanish, I concluded to ask her how many brothers she had.

“Quantos hijos teneis usted?”

The youthful *senorita* blushed violently, and the *senora* glared at me; it was quite evident that I had committed a social error. I reflected, and corrected myself; the *senora* was appeased and there was a general laugh. The trouble was that I had momentarily forgotten the Spanish word meaning “brother” which is “*hermano*.” “*Hijo*” means “son”; I had asked the *senorita* how many sons she had.

It was a delightful evening. The older daughters had been educated in Madrid, and were very musical. There was an excellent piano. A punch was made for us in the dining room and I was privately escorted there by the oldest *senorita* who promised to teach me how

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a Spanish gentleman drinks the health of his lady love. It was apparently to be a very pleasant ceremony, but I was rudely interrupted by Bert Chandler.

The *hacienda* was in the center of a level plain, surrounded by rugged hills. The river wound back 127 and forth through the valley. When we awoke at dawn all outdoors was enveloped in a fog so dense that we could scarcely see the out-buildings; plain and hills and sky were hidden behind a grey bank of mist. Then the sun mounted over the eastern hills. Immediately,—instantly,—the fog vanished; it did not gently roll away, lurking in the shadows; it disintegrated as if it had not been,—as if we had dreamed there was a fog and awakened to find none. All around us,—in a flash,—we saw the vivid green meadows, stretching away to the darkly wooded slopes; cattle grazing here and there, tranquil and unperturbed; the silvery river, searching each corner of the plain and turning again for more merry adventures; solitary palm trees, gravely shaking their heads at another day,—all brilliant under the morning sunlight.

We found that there would be some delay while the river receded, and in order to take up my work with the regiment as promptly as possible, I saddled the led mule and rode to Arecibo over a mountain trail carrying the regimental money. The wagon came in at night.

Arecibo is a beautiful little city on the north coast of Porto Rico. Regimental headquarters were established in the building that had been the custom house. The Colonel used the upper floor; the lower floor was divided between the Adjutant and the Quartermaster. I slept in the quartermaster's office 128 on a cot which I had somehow obtained from the hospital supplies. We were to stay in Arecibo only long enough to gather in a few of the companies that were on garrison duty in neighboring towns. In my department we were very busy with problems of transportation.

Because of the work which I was engaged in, I was privileged to go and come after taps with a detail of men. Of course, such a privilege would be availed of to enjoy the pleasures of the Plaza by night, and on one particular occasion we remained there until the small

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hours. I crept into my quarters, careful not to arouse the Colonel in his rooms upstairs, and went to sleep without removing anything but my shoes.

Before daylight I was awakened by Arthur Draper, the sergeant of the guard. He said: "George, the Colonel wants you." I apprehended the Colonel wanted to express himself about my late hours. I hastily pulled on my shoes, ran my fingers through my hair, and timidly climbed the stairs. The Colonel was in his nightgown. His first remark reassured me. "Very prompt, sergeant," he said. He didn't know how little dressing I had to do.

He said that in the harbor there was a ship from the United States with 26 of his men aboard. I was to go and get them. That was the Colonel's method. He never told anyone how to do anything, but merely to do it, even though it seemed at the time to be impossible, and the surprising thing was that it usually proved to be possible.

I went out and down the street in the direction in which I supposed the wharves should be, although I had never been there. In the dim light of the early morning, I saw a group of natives hurrying in the same direction. On inquiry, I learned that they were lighter-men; they had heard the whistle of the steamer in the roadstead and were going to their boats; My problem was solved; I took possession of the largest boat and its crew.

We rowed down the river and turned into the open roadstead. There was a surf running and the breakers rushed at us from the north, long white lines suddenly appearing out of the morning mist and smashing our bows. But presently we passed through the breakers to smoother water and then we vaguely saw the great hulk of the vessel. We rowed alongside and I called: "Are there any men there for the 6th Massachusetts?" A voice answered: "Hello, George King, here we are." It was Frank Simonds; he recognized my voice.

We took them ashore and they joined their various companies.

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After a stay of only a few days in Arecibo, we moved by rail to San Juan. We went immediately aboard the transport without much opportunity to look around; but this was no disappointment,—we were eager to go home.

Our transport was the Mississippi, a freight steamer which had been generally used for transporting cattle. The decks were still equipped with stanchions. The vessel had been thoroughly fumigated, but the cattle smells still penetrated through the odor of the disinfectant. Hammocks were hung between the stanchions.

Immediately on leaving San Juan harbor, we ran unto a violent storm which continued for four days. The voyage was very rough. When we neared Nantucket the sea quieted, but the weather was still thick. We had been proceeding all the way on dead reckoning and the navigator failed to pick up Nantucket light ship to port as he intended. Soundings were taken and it appeared that we were in shoal water. The course was changed, and suddenly out of the fog we saw the lightship displaying the American flag. It was our first sight of our own country.

After the transport reached Boston, we had an impressive parade over Beacon Hill. The men appeared to be in excellent health and condition. It was due in part to the fact that the sick had been left behind or had come home in other ways, and in part also to the fact that we were very well tanned after our months in the tropics; but quite probably it was principally due to the amount of clothing that we wore. Before we left Porto Rico, the quartermaster's department had attempted to requisition heavy underclothing, but none was available. There was however a considerable supply of light underclothing, and I requisitioned two or three suits for each man and issued them accordingly. The result was that when we landed in Boston many of us had on two or three layers of underwear.

The various companies were immediately sent home on a 60-day furlough. We didn't then know whether our service was actually nearing an end or whether we would be recalled for further duty, possibly in the Philippines.

Regimental headquarters were established in the First Regiment Armory, and because I was in the quartermaster's department, I remained on duty during most of the furlough period. The principal work was to prepare the officers' property returns. A good many line officers had been detailed at various times to act as depot quartermasters, and every officer permanently or temporarily serving in that capacity had to settle his accounts with the Government. The records were in very bad order. Particularly at Camp Alger, we had received and been charged with many supplies which had not been issued and receipted for in a regular way. There was a large discrepancy between the debit and credit sides of the accounts.

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But Yankee ingenuity readily solved the difficulty. In landing our baggage at Guanica, some boxes had been lost overboard. There was no inventory of the lost contents, but on reflection it became obvious that everything that had been received but not issued must have been in these boxes. The reports were so prepared; and an officer's board reviewed the matter and very considerably rendered a favorable finding.

While I was serving at headquarters during this period, Colonel Rice, who although a Colonel of volunteers, had been a captain in the regular army, received his major's commission. He approached my desk in his abrupt way and directed me to get a notary public for him. I said that I was a notary. I had in fact brought my seal to headquarters for the purpose of administering the oaths on the property returns. The Colonel tossed a roll of paper on my desk and told me to administer the oath. I unrolled the paper and saw that it was his commission as a major in the regular army of the United States. I turned to the Colonel and sharply said: "Take off your hat." For an instant he looked at me indignantly; then he grasped the situation. I said: "Hold up your right hand." He obediently raised it. I said: "Repeat after me," and with more formality than I have ever administered an oath before or since, I made him repeat his affirmation of allegiance to the United States. Then I signed and sealed 133 the document, handed it back to him and became an enlisted man

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again. The Colonel laughed. "You had me then, didn't you?" he said. "What is your fee?" I told him that nothing would please me more than an autographed photograph, which I promptly received.

The Colonel went to the Philippines in command of the first of the twenty-five newly organized regiments. I was offered an opportunity to go with him in a minor staff position, but I concluded rather against my desires that a military life in peace times would be aimless and uninteresting.

At the end of our furlough, we were reassembled and mustered out of the service of the United States. There was one last hilarious jollification in Boston; then the regiment broke ranks forever.

And so ended my adventure in the Spanish War.